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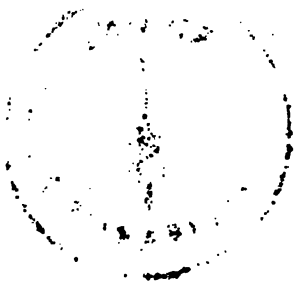

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PREFACE.

THIS little work was written some years previous to the outbreak of the civil rebellion, but was not published on account of the almost universal unpopularity of the subject at that time. Our nation has since learned, by sad experience, that injustice and oppression toward one class, however humble, must revert upon the oppressors. Many of our State legislatures have since repealed unjust laws relating to various classes, and substituted juster ones; among others, the law relating to woman's control of her own property, which may account for some parts of this work which might otherwise seem inconsistent with the present state of affairs.

The friends of human progress throughout the world have every reason to congratulate themselves upon the rapid strides that the principles of true republicanism have made within the last ten years. And although much has been done, much remains to be done.

The friends of the Woman's Rights movement are now striving for a hearing, and we would earnestly desire all classes, and more especially women, not to condemn this movement before carefully considering its real meaning. Thousands of women who happen to be favored by fortune, and surrounded by friends, evince no interest in this movement. The object of the following

story is to illustrate the fickleness of fortune, and to convince such that our laws should be so framed as to throw protection around woman in the vicissitudes of life. The advocates of the Woman's Rights movement are in many cases meeting with opposition and calumny, although they speak truth and demand nothing but justice. We are actuated by one motive, the elevation of woman, and through her the elevation of the race. What think you, reader, does not God approve of this motive?

It is a well-authenticated fact, that the further a nation advances in civilization, the higher becomes the position allotted to woman. Has not our own nation ever been the vanguard of freedom and liberalism? What land presents greater facilities for the furtherance of this object than our own? What time more propitious than the present? "Now is the accepted time, and now the day of salvation." We believe that God is with us, and though all the nations should combine against us, our cause must ultimately prevail.

Hoping that this simple story of every-day life may be the means of presenting the subject in a clearer and truer light to the minds of some, who otherwise might remain indifferent to or prejudiced against it, we commend it to the American people, trusting that it will "push its pound" in the great work of righting Woman's Wrongs.

R. S. H.

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PAGE

A Conversation upon Woman's Rights, ... 7

CHAPTER II.

Mary's First Trial, ... 17

CHAPTER III.

Edwin True's First Love, ... 27

CHAPTER IV.

Mary's Fortune goes to her Husband's Father, . 43

CHAPTER V.

Mary's Third Marriage and Sickness, ... 77

CHAPTER VI.

Old Mrs. Poor, ... 84

CHAPTER VII.

Eunice's Intrigues, ... 89

CHAPTER VIII.

Eunice's Base Strategy, ... 106

CHAPTER IX.

The Progress of Slander, ... 117

CHAPTER X.

FRESH DEVELOPMENTS—NEW INTRIGUES, ... 135

CHAPTER XI.

POVERTY—JOY—PEACE—SORROW, ... 146

CHAPTER XII.

FIDELIA AND DELILA, ... 165

CHAPTER XIII.

A LOST CHILD, ... 191

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH, AND THE MANIAC'S CELL,. 211

WOMAN'S WRONGS.

CHAPTER I.

A CONVERSATION UPON WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

It was evening, in the spring of 1856. There came a slight tap at the door, and in walked our friend Justice. We were glad to see him, for he is not only our friend, but the friend of mankind also. An hour's converse with him is like an oasis in the desert. We half forget the selfish, ignoble multitude by which we are surrounded, and our respect for human nature revives. He threw himself into a seat, with a dejected air. Have you heard unwelcome news? I asked.

Unwelcome indeed, he answered, they have succeeded in repealing the Maine Liquor Law.

Is it possible? said I. Yes, exclaimed he, it is even so! The glory of Maine has departed; she is no longer the brilliant polar star, but from henceforth

a reproach and a by-word. I was trying to obtain the amount of misery that would result, the barrels of tears which would flow, in consequence of this one act of our legislature.

It were a vain effort, I replied; you might as well attempt to number the grains of sand on the ocean's shore, or to barrel up all its troubled waters. Oh! how long will vice triumph over virtue?

Alas! sighed Justice, this great evil might have been averted had we allowed woman the right to vote, which justly belongs to her. I was disgusted lately, while listening to a conversation between Mr. A. and Mr. B. on the subject of woman's rights. They indulged in witty and flippant remarks, until A. said,

After all, the fault is in a great measure our own. Had we kept them in slavery, as they were before the light of Christianity dawned on the earth, they would have known their place; but we have petted and caressed them, until they have grown saucy. We have moved along in the rail-car, and given them a chance to sit down; have taken a seat with the driver of the stage-coach in a storm, that she and

her baby might be sheltered inside; and stepped politely aside on the walk, to give her a chance to pass (if she happened to be well dressed). Now they have not strength of mind to bear all this condescension; it makes them important, and they wish to assume our prerogatives.

Yes, said B., but I shall condescend no more. Let them take their chance, in journeying and at home, since they contend so loudly for their rights. The truth is, they do not know their own interest. Has it not ever been the interest of the sex to please us? They have always passed the days of their youth in adorning their persons, and acquiring showy accomplishments, that we might look on them with admiration. She is obliged to do so, for she is depending on us. She has no capacity to receive a liberal education, and therefore cannot enter into any of the professions; and if she qualifies herself to keep accounts and enter a store, she cannot command half the pay for the same amount of labor that one of our boys can. Now what can she do, but practice every art to captivate us, that we may choose her for a companion and give her a home? for she cannot

choose one of us. You know if she gets acquainted with a man whose talents she respects, and whose virtues she loves, she is not allowed to tell him it would make her happy to possess his affections. He would be disgusted, because custom forbids woman to propose.

Now the noise about womans' rights will avail nothing, only to divest her of half her charms. For what is more gratifying to us? What fills us with more complacency than to look at the lovely creatures, and know that they depend on our fancy or caprice. We realize that we are the lords of creation.

Your views on this subject, replied A., exactly coincide with mine. Let woman become independent, and she is shorn of half her charms. Besides, it is entertaining, it is as good as a play, to watch the envy, jealousy, and backbiting which exists among them. If we compliment one of the sex more than the rest, the majority join in traducing her.

Well, Mr. Justice, said I, we must own A. was correct in the last assertion. There are noble exceptions to be sure, but it is a trait of the female character to traduce each other.

Yes, replied Justice, but let woman be more independent, and the cause would be removed. It is the mutual desire to obtain our favor which brings those unamiable feelings into action.

But I deny that this trait is peculiar to females. It is the depravity of human nature, and we discover the same tendency in men when their interests clash. Our merchants are watching each other, and are constantly in fear lest one should obtain or receive more patronage than another. The most successful physician in a community is looked upon with envious eyes by others who have not been quite as successful, and they are pleased when he has the misfortune to lose a patient; and I am sorry to inform you that I have even detected a gleam of satisfaction in the eye of the minister, when he heard his superior lightly spoken of. We find some few exceptions to this, as well as to other general rules; some few noble souls who despise a mean action.

Mr. A. and Mr. B. concluded their remarks by asserting that woman could never attain that to which she aspired; her constitution forbade it. She has neither courage to combat danger, nor skill to govern.

Now all who are versed in history know this to be false, for it abounds in instances of female courage. Had Mrs. Duston no courage, who slew ten Indians with one of their own hatchets, and that, too, in a week after the birth of her infant. Had Aria no courage, the Roman lady whose husband, having rebelled against Claudius, was ordered to destroy himself? Seeing him hesitate, she plunged the poniard into her own breast, to give him courage to perform the act he was ordered to do, and presented it to him, saying, "Paetus, it is not painful."

It *is* false that females are wanting in the skill which is requisite in governing. What have historians recorded of Elizabeth, queen of England? The following will show. "If the question respecting the equality of the sexes was to be determined by an appeal to the characters of sovereign princes, the comparison is, in proportion, manifestly in favor of woman." Elizabeth reigned forty-five years, and there have been few great kings whose reigns are comparable to hers. It was the most beautiful period of English history. Your queen, says Pope Sixtus to an Englishman, is born fortunate. She governs her

kingdom with great happiness. Compared with the reign of her father, that of Elizabeth is called the "golden age." In regard to woman being born with inferior capacity, hear Mr. J. B. Dod's opinion; the opinion of him who is the author of a celebrated work on the science of the soul; and to whose lectures senators and statesmen have listened with profound attention. He says:

"We see the importance of woman being highly educated. Colleges should be dedicated to her, and all the great and useful sciences which strengthen, expand, and elevate the mind should be laid at her feet. Her mind should be early imbued with political science, and taught the value of liberty, and the deep-toned love of country. She should be taught the history of fallen empires, kingdoms, and republics. She should be educated in every sense equal to man."

These are the words of a distinguished man, and they express my opinion exactly.

Why should not woman be allowed an active part in government? Why should she not be permitted to vote?

I know of no reason, I replied, only that they are not generally informed in political subjects, and are therefore unqualified to take an active part in government.

That, exclaimed Justice, is the opinion of many eminent men. That some women are qualified, who are within the circle of my acquaintance, I know full well; and that every woman might be, who is blessed with common sense and common learning, hardly admits of a doubt. But just as they are, they are as well prepared to vote as the mass of men. The most of our laborers have but very little information, and I have known more than one to sell his vote for a pair of shoes. How absurd is the fact that crowds of ignorant foreigners, many of whom know not the alphabet, should be allowed an influence in framing our laws; while women of learning and principle are debarred the privilege. Often have I seen the crafty demagogue, who was anxious for nothing but the emoluments of office, lead a party of foreigners to the bar-room, when each one of them sold his vote for one glass of the soul-destroying liquid.

Besides, if ladies were expected at the ballot-box, men would appear there with decorum; our elections would no longer be disgraced by noisy quarrels or bloody, brutal fights. The presence of virtuous females has a refining influence, and our political meetings would become scenes of propriety and courtesy. There would be no more impropriety in the mingling of the sexes in the affairs of government, than there is in their uniting in public worship. They have the same interest in these things that men have. How many righteous measures have failed, which would have succeeded, had females been allowed to vote. Then, again, our laws are unjust in regard to woman. We know that human nature is selfish, and men having monopolized an exclusive right to enact laws, they will be in their own favor. Sensible men know this, and the reason the subject of woman's rights is treated with ridicule, is because they are unable to meet it with fair argument.

And yet, I replied, I have heard many women say they enjoyed all the rights they wished for. Is it not those of nervous constitutions, and discontented dispositions, who are disposed to complain?

I think not, said Justice; I would like to relate the history of a lady whom I once heard make the same declaration.

My curiosity is excited, I said; relate the story.

It is too long for an evening's entertainment, returned Justice; but I will employ my leisure time in writing it, and present it to you in manuscript.

Mr. Justice never breaks his word, and in due time I received it. The following is the story.

CHAPTER II.

MARY'S FIRST TRIAL.

MARY was very young when married to her first husband, who died two years after of consumption, leaving her a childless widow. About a week previous to his death, he extended his emaciated hand to his wife, and said:

My dear Mary, I feel I must soon leave you? I have lingered longer than I expected. My sufferings have been great, but I feel that my deliverance is near. The world has gradually receded, and I am willing to depart; the only attachment which binds me to earth is my love for you.

She bent over him with deep emotion, for although for months she had entertained no hope of his recovery, yet to hear from his own lips that his departure was at hand, expressed, too, with such ten-

derness, overcame her firmness. She attempted to reply, but tears choked her utterance.

In yonder desk, he continued, you will find my will, by which I have bequeathed to you my fortune. It is mingled with other documents, but the will is distinguished from the rest, by a black ribbon which is tied around it. I did not envelope it in black to invite you to mourning when you opened it; but because the ribbon was near when I was in need of it. God knows I do not wish you to mourn for me, Mary; my greatest sorrow is that I must leave you mourning. I know a heart like yours cannot be happy without some object to love. I do not wish you to continue single. You have no child to engross your affections, and life would become insipid.

Do not mention it, she said, sobbingly, it would be sacrilege to give my hand without the heart, and I can never, never love again.

I doubt not you think so now, my dear Mary, he answered, for you are young, and know not the progress of human sorrow. God has wisely ordained that the living shall not mourn for the dead without ceasing. But, Mary, I have suffered much fear and

foreboding for you. I know the warmth of your affections, the strength of your attachments, and the ardor of your temperament. You judge the world by the innocence and purity of your own nature.

The Scripture informs us that the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. I would not have you suppose that all the world are treacherous and deceitful; but know, my dear, that treacherous and deceitful persons form a part of every community. Yes, strange as it may seem to you, many whom you meet in the street, and at public entertainments, have no better principles than a highwayman. It often happens that they are admitted into fashionable circles, who live by indirect robbery. They study to take advantage of every opportunity to replenish their pockets. Matrimony is their peculiar field. They seek to kidnap the hearts of such females as you, because they consider you an easy prey. They will present a genteel appearance, assume gentlemanly airs, and approach you with ease and assurance. They will seek to win your confidence by the most profound respect, and then gradually steal your affections by the most assiduous

attentions, affecting the most tender interest in all which relates to your welfare or happiness. I have seen men of this class who, happening to have the organs of imitation and secretiveness largely developed, had schooled themselves so successfully, that they could readily counterfeit all the pathetic and persuasive characteristics of true love. Such men are extremely dangerous, for they often possess the power of throwing a charm over the imagination of their victims, which amounts to fascination, the influence of which is almost irresistible. Beware of such, my dear Mary; shun them at all times, and in all places. Let no confidence in the steadfastness of your own virtue, no idle curiosity, or love of flattery, induce you to listen one moment to their tale of love. Could your pure eyes behold at one glance all the sorrow and suffering, the misery and wretchedness which such men have caused, you would shrink aghast from the sight.

He sank back exhausted, for in the earnestness of his feelings he had partly raised himself in the bed, and a violent fit of coughing succeeded which put an end to the conversation. One week after, he ex-

pired, and Mary's lonely sorrow can be realized by none but those who have passed through a similar trial. She felt she should always clothe herself in the habiliments of mourning; and that the image of her departed husband should never be absent from her mind. She continued in this state of feeling some months; but at length she gradually returned to ordinary cares and pleasures. Then she reproached herself with ingratitude, and resolved never again to be recreant to the memory of her loved one. She retired to his grave as usual, and still continued to shed over it the tears of grief. By degrees she became less attached to the spot, and at the approach of winter she abandoned her accustomed walk to the grave-yard. As the season of social intercourse advanced, she regained a little of her former cheerfulness, and on the return of spring, when the genial sunbeams had broken the chains of nature, and the streams were gushing forth with a voice of triumph, like children let loose from school; and the trees, being warmed into new life, were putting forth their verdure; while the birds, with newly chosen mates, were returning to their old haunts with the

voice of love; and the fields which had been so lately enveloped in the dreary shroud of winter, now glowing with all the beauty and freshness of spring,—in short, when universal nature was rejoicing, Mary's heart instinctively rejoiced.

Weeks rolled on, and the infant buds expanded into blooming flowers, and the boughs were bending with the weight of the green foliage, when Mary wandered forth to her woodland retreats. Busy memory recalled a manly form, and a pensive melancholy stole over her features, as with slow steps and plaintive voice she sang a mournful ditty. Midsummer approached, and Mary became cheerful. All whom she met smiled upon her, and she returned an answering smile.

But innumerable incidents from time to time renewed the memory of her grief. If a bouquet of flowers were presented to her, among them she beheld his favorite flower. When she walked forth at evening in the silver moonlight, if her ears were saluted by the notes of the nightingale, mingled with the murmur of the distant waterfall, she remembered with a sigh his ardent love of nature's harmony. As

time advanced, these reflections returned less frequently, and often did she reproach herself that it was so.

When stern winter had again sealed up the fountains of out-door enjoyment, and the gay world sought the festive halls, Mary for the first time since her husband's death, mingled with the festive band. When her friends suggested the idea, she told them she could not join their gay assemblies; but they were urgent in their solicitations, and at last she yielded, and accompanied them to the decorated hall. Chandeliers, suspended from the arches, threw a deluge of light on the artificial flowers, festooned evergreens, spangled costumes, and animated countenances, which were mingled together in lovely confusion. As Mary entered and viewed the gay assembly, truly, thought she, this is a delightful scene; and at that moment the throng came forth in a body to welcome her to their midst. A pleasurable emotion thrilled her heart at the cordial reception; but when they had retired to their seats, and the managers were calling forth the dancers, she had leisure for reflection. Her mind reverted to the last even-

ing she danced in that very hall. The spacious apartment and its appendages were the same as on that occasion, but where was he, for whose eyes she had adorned her person, and for whose ears she had attuned her voice to its sweetest accents. Oh, where was he, who was her partner in the dance, who, bending slightly towards her with languishing eyes, doated on her loveliness? Alas! gone forever, she mentally exclaimed, and oh, why am I here? Better be at home, ingrate as I am, or in yonder church-yard, shedding warm tears on the frozen sods which cover his remains.

At this moment, the orchestra struck up its merry music, the fairy forms of the dancers glided past her, and a party of ladies and gentlemen gathered around her and entered into lively conversation. Mary, who was of a versatile disposition, at length entered into the spirit of the evening, still with a slight feeling of self-upbraiding, although, as the company were dispersing, a shower of compliments fell upon her.

At midnight she was seated alone in her chamber, musing on the present and the past. She felt the restoring influence of society.

Surely, said she, the commonplace is insufficient to fill the youthful mind. What is the harm in escaping for a few hours to a scene of hilarity? Were it not that I am wronging the dead, it would be a source of enjoyment, but this painful reflection mars my pleasure. Again she thought, how can we wrong the dead? Have they not passed beyond all earthly influences?

The unreasonableness of her self-reproach now manifested itself to her mind, and now recurred to her for the first time, the expression of her dying husband, "God has wisely ordained that the living shall not mourn for the dead without ceasing." Mary felt the truth of this remark, although when her husband uttered it, she deemed it impossible. If we mourn incessantly, grief would unfit us for life's duties as well as its pleasures. She retired calmly to rest, and from that hour ceased to reproach herself, but yielded to the natural flow of her spirits. With subdued gayety she continued to mingle with fashionable circles during the winter, and her reputed wealth caused her to be much sought after by the gentlemen. They followed her

with flattering words and admiring looks, and vied with each other in the effort to win her affections. Mary kept them all at a distance by a cold civility. She remembered the caution of her dying husband, and acted accordingly.

CHAPTER III.

EDWIN TRUE'S FIRST LOVE.

NEAR the close of the season, as a Mr. Goodwill and his lady were returning from an evening party, the husband remarked:

What can be the matter with Edwin True? He used to be one of the most animated young men we had among us, but he appears now as if he had lost every friend.

I have heard it spoken of frequently of late, said his wife. The people generally are wondering what the cause can be which has changed his appearance, in so marked a manner. They speak with feeling on the subject. I think he has many friends.

Yes, said Mr. Goodwill, the community entertain friendly feelings toward young True. His courteous manners and benevolent countenance seem to secure the good wishes of all.

That is the cause, the goodness of his heart, responded the wife; it expresses itself on his face and governs every movement. His courtesy is not of that spurious sort which is assumed for selfish purposes. It is the genuine article.

I was speaking to Mr. Brown on the subject, said Mr. Goodwill. Brown, you know, is his room-mate. He told me True had been a very agreeable companion until recently. Within two or three months he has gradually become gloomy and abstracted, seeming to lose all interest in what is passing around him. It was last Sunday, I believe, he opened the door of their room suddenly, and found Edwin in a musing posture, with the tears trickling silently down his cheeks.

It is hopeless love, exclaimed Mrs. Goodwill; I know by the symptoms.

Who can he be in love with, asked her husband, I have not seen him pay the least attention to any female this winter.

Neither have I, answered she, but I think I know who it is. I believe it to be the young widow who rejoined our fashionable circles last winter.

You may well say hopeless love, if she is the one, said Mr. Goodwill. What reason have you to suppose it is her?

I happened to be present, replied the lady, when he was introduced to her; he blushed and seemed embarrassed, which struck me at the time as being singular, for you know he has never been considered bashful.

But that is no proof, said the husband. He has not been seen to wait on her, or to attempt to do so.

Were she poor, he would have done so, the lady replied. Her wealth discourages him. I have noticed more than once during the winter, that when she was surrounded by flattering coxcombs, he would sit silently apart, and look upon her with an expression of tenderness in his eyes, which would deepen into an earnestness that seemed as if his soul was raised to heaven in an ejaculatory prayer for her present and eternal happiness.

Poor fellow! exclaimed Mr. Goodwill. I fear that will have to be his part to do the praying, while some purse-proud nob carries off the prize. I am very sorry for Edwin; he is a strictly honest young

man, and has been very industrious and persevering in acquiring an education, to fit himself for an honorable and useful position in society. And now that he is just commencing business in the way of his profession, it seems to be a pity his energies should be paralyzed by the withering touch of unsuccessful love.

If the matter is managed a little, said Mrs. Goodwill, I am not certain that it will be unsuccessful, for I am almost sure the widow's affections are disengaged. Instead of being puffed up with conceit, as most young ladies would be if caressed so much, she appears to be on her guard.

I have noticed that, remarked Mr. Goodwill. She has a wonderful faculty of passing off superfluous attentions without giving encouragement or offense. There is not much chance for young True, however, for if ever she marries again she will wish to add to her fortune.

I am not positive of that, answered Mrs. Goodwill. Women are not all speculators. As we are partially acquainted with her, I will send her my compliments with an invitation to tea. If she comes

(and I presume she will) you try to leave your business and sit an hour after tea. We will allude to young True, in the presence of the lady, without insinuating that she is the disturber of his peace.

Truly, said Mr. Goodwill, it requires you women to scheme. Yes, I will be present if you desire it, but I am doubtful in regard to your success.

I may not be successful, she replied, but there is no harm in trying. I despise a person of an intriguing, underhanded disposition, but a little management when we hope to do good by it, seems to me to be justifiable.

Accordingly cards of invitation were sent to half a dozen ladies, including the young widow. At the appointed time the party met, and were taking tea at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Goodwill.

I was hoping that I should see that which I like this evening, remarked Mr. Goodwill.

What is that? asked his wife.

A few gentlemen dropping in, said he, when a party of ladies have assembled; it adds a zest to the enjoyment when the sexes mingle in the social circle.

Why did you not invite some, inquired Mrs. Goodwill.

I did invite Mr. Brown and Mr. True, he said, but Mr. Brown was previously engaged, and Mr. True wished to be excused as he was not well.

One of the ladies remarked that she thought he had been unwell all winter. Another lady said she had never observed so great a change in an individual in so short a time. A third expressed it as her opinion that he had the liver complaint, for that affects the mind, and she had been informed he was very melancholy.

I am constrained to call it the heart disease, said Mrs. Goodwill. The liver complaint never causes the unbidden tear to flow, nor to steal silently down the cheek.

Do you think he is wounded in love? asked a lady.

I do, answered Mrs. Goodwill.

Who can the lady be, said another. I have not seen him pay particular attention to any one. He has always been polite to all, but I think his heart has never been affected toward any.

Some young men, said Mrs. Goodwill, are in love with every pretty girl they happen to meet. Such love is superficial and not worth possessing. His love has never been awakened until recently; it is a deep sentiment which pervades his whole being.

Who do you suppose the fair one to be? inquired the lady.

I am not certain who it is, replied Mrs. Goodwill.

Wife thinks it is some one who is above him in point of wealth, said Mr. Goodwill, and that he thinks it useless to declare his affection, therefore he pines in secret grief.

I should think, said a lady, that an educated young man, just entering an honorable profession, with his character for active energy, strict honesty, and unbending integrity, might dare to hope.

I should think so too, rejoined Mr. Goodwill. Although he has no capital in his purse, he has capital in himself. His character, habits, and talents, are, in my opinion, the best of capital, because they promise permanent prosperity.

Here the subject was dropped and another topic

introduced. The next week it was announced that the closing ball of the season was to come off.

Husband, said Mrs. Goodwill, I want you to officiate as one of the managers at this ball.

Why so, he inquired.

Because I wish you to distribute the tickets.

Oh, replied he, that is out of fashion; every gentleman chooses his partner in the dance.

If you are one of the managers you can recommend the ticket system, said Mrs. Goodwill. If they object, argue the case in this way: Gentlemen, what is the object of this ball? Is it not to promote mutual enjoyment and mutual friendship? These objects are not attained when we practice the choosing system. Of course, the best dancers will be chosen first, which will excite pride on their part, while the rest will sit neglected and mortified, watching the dancers with envy. The distribution of tickets gives all a fair chance; all enter into the enjoyment of the evening with feelings of friendship.

Your argument is reasonable, said Mr. Goodwill. I will use my influence as you desire.

Well, said she, when distributing the tickets, I

want you to select the same numbers for Edwin True and the young widow.

Ah! now that you have given her his character, you wish to bring them together, do you? said Mr. Goodwill.

Yes, I do, replied his wife.

Well, returned he, I will draw them together as partners in the dance all the evening, and see if he will muster courage to pop the question.

I do not expect that, she exclaimed, but I wish to bring them together, that they may understand each other.

How are they to understand each other unless they converse on the subject? asked Mr. Goodwill.

Phrenologists inform us, said Mrs. Goodwill, that the organ of language is in the eye, and perhaps that is why the eye often expresses more than the tongue. And it is not the eye alone which has the power of expression. Movements and gestures have a strong language of their own, inasmuch as whole plays have been acted on the stage, without a word being spoken. It is evident to my mind that she is thoroughly disgusted with the flippant fops who flutter

around her. Besides, she has a sympathizing soul, and when she discovers that she is the one who has unconsciously captivated him, it will enlist her sympathy, and in such cases sympathy is usually the harbinger of a more tender sentiment.

About six months after this conversation, Mr. Goodwill entered his house and threw himself leisurely into a chair, exclaiming as he did so,

Well, wife, you did really do good by that little scheme of yours. I just called on Mr. and Mrs. True, and if happiness exists on this ball of earth, it is under their roof.

I have been told so, responded Mrs. Goodwill. Mrs. Quiz prolonged her call until Mr. True left for his office, when she inquired of Mrs. True if thoughts of her first husband did not mar her happiness.

Mrs. True replied, that our duty is toward the living, not the dead.

Her happiness consists in seeing him happy, said Mr. Goodwill, that is evident, and when you have called on them, you will say the same.

I do not doubt it in the least, responded the wife,

it is the natural effect of his sincere devotion to her. Love begets love, you know.

Soon after this, Mr. True and his lady gave a party, and I enjoyed the pleasure of mingling with the numerous company which gathered on the occasion. Never shall I forget the noble figure of True as he moved among his guests. His stature, tall and graceful as the forest pine, his face beaming like the rising orb of day; and when earnestly discussing an exciting topic, the flash of his eye was like the lightning of heaven. But when those eyes were bent on Mary, they wore a soft, melting expression, as if they were dissolving away. And she would return such a sweet, confiding look, that they reminded me of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden before their fall. It was on this occasion that the subject of "woman's rights" was introduced, and various were the opinions expressed on the subject.

Mrs. True remarked that she had all the rights she wished for; she felt that she was filling the sphere for which God and nature designed her.

The next week the sewing circle met, and Mr. and Mrs. True were once more the text.

Mrs. Benevolence said she felt to rejoice with Edwin True that he had been so fortunate in his choice.

Madame Envy who had six daughters on her hands, and who had been on the watch for every promising young man in the community, and with Edwin True among the rest, said for her part she was perfectly disgusted with the appearance of Ed. True and his wife on the evening of the party. Such soft, silly looks as he cast on her; and then to see her look up at him as though she thought he belonged to a superior order of beings. Husband and I ridiculed them all the way home. I told my girls I was reminded of the old saying, "hot love is soon cold." My daughter prophesied they would quarrel like cats and dogs before two years roll around. At any rate, I do not believe their happiness will continue long.

Mrs. Experience said, as to their quarrelling, she thought neither of them had the organ of combativeness largely developed; but she feared their happiness would be of short duration. For as we look back on life, we realize how short have been its

gleams of gladness; how few the spots of sunshine, amidst the gloom which o'ershadowed our pathway. The great Creator gives us our blessings, but He designs not this world for our permanent home, and by the fleeting nature of our enjoyments, and the afflictions which fall to our lot, he seeks to wean us from a world we must soon leave.

Meanwhile, Mr. True and his lady were enjoying all the blessings of domestic love, all the peace which virtue brings. Loving goodness supremely, and their hearts overflowing with the milk of human kindness, they were unconscious of the envy and ill-will which their tranquil happiness excited in the minds of the wicked. They lived systematically. Each day was divided into three distinct parts. Eight hours were given to business, eight to rest, and eight to intellectual improvement and spiritual advancement. Mr. True had begun housekeeping with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and daily prayer. He said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

During Mr. True's absence to his office, Mrs. True devoted herself to domestic duties; for she was a lady who had received a useful as well as an accom-

plished education. They were aware of the importance of inhaling pure air, in order that they might have physical as well as intellectual health; consequently they kept their carriage, and drove into the country every week. Their tastes were similar, for when Mary uttered an exclamation of delight at the sight of deep green meadows, waving fields of grain, or the orchards bending beneath their golden load, Edwin smiled, and mentally thanked God that he had given him a wife who was sensible of the beauty of his handiwork. For he reflected that the mind which is so alive to the beauties of nature, will not be slow to perceive moral excellence.

They both felt compassion for every suffering creature. One day, as they were taking their usual ride, Edwin perceived a boy with a pebble in his hand, which he was aiming at a little bird. Edwin spoke kindly, and said, don't, my dear, throw that stone; if you were a bird, you would not like to have stones thrown at you. . . .

On the occasion of a picnic party several ladies were pursuing a snake, with sticks in their hands,

when Mary entreated them not to hurt the poor thing, as it was only a little green snake, and perfectly harmless. It seemed that nature had designed them expressly for each other, for their hearts always beat in unison. But as Mrs. Envy had hoped, and Mrs. Experience had feared, their happiness was to be of short duration. The golden hours of one bright year had flown swiftly away, when Edwin was taken ill. He had felt unwell for several days, but had said nothing of it to Mary, hoping each day to feel better on the morrow. At length he was obliged to leave his office at an unusual hour, and return home. As soon as he entered, Mary exclaimed,

Why, Edwin! what is the matter? you look extremely ill.

I am not well, he replied; I think I have taken a severe cold. I will retire to bed, and with a little of your good nursing, I shall probably soon be well.

Wait a little, said she, until I get a vessel of warm water to bathe your feet.

After bathing his feet, she applied drafts and assisted him to bed. Having given emetics, cathartics, and drinks made of medicinal herbs, to no purpose,

Mary sent for a physician. The doctor, after examining his patient, pronounced it a case of typhoid fever.

Is he dangerously ill? Mary inquired, anxiously.

Not at present, was the answer; but it is uncertain how it will turn.

The night following reason was dethroned; he uttered incoherent sounds, and at times seemed in great mental distress. Poor Mary watched by his bedside day and night with intense anxiety. Alas! watching and nursing were all in vain; he suffered three weeks, when he expired without having had a return of reason. With Mary there was no violent burst of grief; she seemed stunned by the blow, and sank into a sort of apathy.

CHAPTER IV.

MARY'S FORTUNE GOES TO HER HUSBAND'S FATHER.

NOTHING was said in regard to the settlement of the property for a month after the funeral. The parents of Edwin True had retired to rest. They were talking of their son and lamenting his early death.

But, said the old gentleman, he has left us a fine fortune.

How is that? said the mother, Edwin had no property.

Did he not marry a handsome fortune, asked the father?

His wife, I know, has a fortune, said she.

Well, rejoined he, when she wedded with our son, it was his fortune; and he being dead, of course I am the lawful heir. The widow can draw only her third.

I am surprised, she answered, to hear you talk of

robbing the widow; is it not *directly* contrary to Scripture? Every feeling of our nature should revolt at the idea of afflicting those whom God has seen fit to chasten.

How, said the old man, can you call it robbing the widow, when I demand nothing but my own? The law settles the question. There is no room for argument or dispute. Has not our country a world-wide fame for its just and equal laws? Justice and equity are the pride and boast of our nation.

Instead of boasting, said the wife, she had better put her hand on her mouth, and her mouth in the dust, and cry guilty, guilty, as long as she retains more than three millions of human beings in the bonds of slavery. As well might the bride boast that her white raiment denotes purity and innocence, when on its folds are seen the stains of prostitution and the bloodspots of murder.

In regard to slavery, he returned, it is no worse for black men to be slaves than it is for white men. I have been a slave all my days. How hard we have worked, how many comforts we sacrificed to educate Edwin, hoping when he should become a

successful lawyer to reap our reward; and now that he has been taken away from us, why not avail ourselves of those advantages which are left?

Because it would be unjust, she replied, and were you strictly conscientious, that would be a sufficient reason. It is far from the "golden rule," which commands us to "do unto others as we would have others do unto us." We knew when we were exerting ourselves to educate Edwin, that he was mortal and liable to death.

The wife's argument availed nothing. Old Mr. True was decided. Poor Mary, she found that the good man who had bequeathed to her his fortune, although he had warned her against seducers and swindlers, could not protect her against the unjust laws of her country. She did not fully comprehend her loss, for she did not know the value of money. Her excellent aunt had taught her that wealth was mean when compared with noble qualities of heart and mind. She had heard her speak, also, with disgust of such persons as are all obsequiousness; nay, perfectly awe-struck, in the presence of those who have nothing but money to recommend them. Be-

sides, she had never known want, nor the care of her own support. Mrs. Benevolence called to see her. Edwin's recent death had thrown an air of desolation over the whole establishment.

Pardon me, my dear Mrs. True, said she, as she pressed Mary's hand, for intruding on your seclusion. I was aware that your house was not yet open for the reception of company, but when I heard you had trouble added to trouble, I felt that I must see you. It is cruel, that you should have your property stripped from you by those who have no more right to it than the pirate on the high seas. Weep not, dear Mary, God is in the storm as well as in the sunshine, and may be preparing you for great spiritual blessings.

'Tis not for the loss of the property that I weep, answered Mary; the interest of one third will support me in a humble way; but when I awoke from the stupor which my dear Edwin's sudden death had thrown over my senses, my heart yearned toward his parents; and I exclaimed, like Ruth, I will never leave them nor forsake them. Where they go, I will go; where they lodge, I will lodge; their people shall

be my people, and their God my God. Then father True came here, and brought others with him, to take the valuation of the furniture, and he came in without ringing the bell, met me with such cold, stern looks, and went through every part of the house with such an air of command, that my heart shrank back within itself, and I mentally exclaimed, "Surely God is our only refuge in time of trouble."

Yes, said Mrs. Benevolence, Christ said, I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you; because I live, ye shall live also. But what plan have you, in regard to your future course?

I mean to sell my third, she replied, and turn it into money, which I intend to put at interest. Then I shall retire from the world, to some solitary retreat. My hope of earthly happiness has expired. I have no wish but to seclude myself from society, and pass the remainder of my days alone.

Retirement, said Mrs. Benevolence, will be salutary for the present, at least. Watching, anxiety, and grief have so overwrought your nervous system, that you need repose and quiet. There is a family by the name of Smith, who reside in a sequestered

spot in the suburbs of the city. They possess an independent fortune, although their style of living is rather antique. They are very kind, amiable people, and have no children. The family consists of themselves and an old maid, a niece of Mr. Smith's, who has charge of the domestic affairs. She has been with them some ten or twelve years, and is a great comfort to Mrs. Smith; indeed, I know not how they would get along without her, for Mrs. Smith has been an invalid for some five years. Their house is a substantial building of olden style, but it is unpainted, and the tall old elms which surround it imparts rather a gloomy aspect. The silence which reigns without and within would be soothing to your distracted mind, and favorable to religious contemplation.

Do they entertain much company? asked Mary.

Very little, replied Mrs. Benevolence. Mrs. Smith has been declining in health so long, people have ceased to visit her; they only call occasionally.

I like the description of the place, and the people, said Mary; do you think they would be willing to take a boarder?

I think they would take you, answered Mrs. Benevolence. If you desire it, I will ride over and talk with them about it.

I thank you, said Mary, I should be very glad to have you do so. You are very kind to interest yourself for me.

Oh! that is but a trifle, rejoined Mrs. Benevolence, I wish it was it was in my power to render you more essential service. My carriage is at the door, and I will drive over there immediately.

It was soon arranged that Mary should abide in the quiet family of Mr. Smith. Mrs. Smith had been an ambitious woman; but had now arrived at that period in life when hope gives place to memory. In her retrospect of life she realized that all was vanity and vexation of spirit. There was one thought which afforded her satisfaction; it was her deeds of charity and kindness. Visions of the past were continually rising before her; and when those scenes passed before her mind's eye where she had been the ministering angel, had soothed the sorrowful, comforted the afflicted, or spoken kindly to the unfortunate, it was like a cordial to her spirit. De-

voutly did she thank God that she had been enabled to do a little good on this her earthly pilgrimage; and oh! how bitterly did she lament opportunities neglected, and time misspent, that might have been devoted to the practice of goodness.

Mrs. Benevolence had given them a sketch of Mary's history; how she had been left an orphan in infancy and adopted by her aunt, who having no child of her own, had watched over Mary with a mother's care and solicitude. This worthy woman died about the time of Mary's marriage with her first husband. She also informed them of the present condition of Mary's affairs.

Certainly, said Mr. Smith, the sympathy of all good persons should be enlisted on her side.

They are so enlisted, she answered, but the law is in their favor.

With this amiable pair Mary found contentment and peace. She had retained her library, and hes found an exhaustless fountain of pleasure amid the volumes of ancient and modern authors. Mr. Smith, though not a learned man, had been an extensive reader, which rendered his conversation interesting.

Mrs. Smith, too, as her disease advanced, became more tender and affectionate to those around her, and especially toward Mary, who she considered a child of misfortune, was her manner gentle and winning. One day she said to Mary,

I wish we had some musical instrument in the house. It seems to me that the sound of plaintive music would soothe my sufferings and cause me to forget my pain.

She was looking at Mary and observed the change that came over her countenance. Mary made no reply; she sat as if spell-bound, struggling with strong emotion. At length she arose and left the room. She went to her apartment, unlocked her trunk and took out a harp. Its chords had slumbered since Edwin's death, and as she raised it from the trunk she trembled violently. As she gazed on the harp, she heaved a deep sigh, and audibly exclaimed, No, I cannot play to-day, the request was too sudden and unexpected. She replaced the harp, and returned to the room she had left. On the next day, immediately after arising from her devotions, while her spirit was yet pervaded by that holy calm

which follows our heartfelt petitions at the throne of grace, Mary took her harp and walked calmly into the presence of Mrs. Smith. She looked up with pleased surprise, and said:

Why, Mrs. True, I did not know you had a harp.

Yes, I have one, said Mary, and would have played yesterday, could I have summoned sufficient fortitude.

She commenced to play and accompanied the harp with her voice. It trembled slightly at first, but she soon regained her self-control. By chance, on that occasion Mary happened to be robed in a loose white dress, and as she sang and played upon the harp, her countenance expressive of mournful resignation, Mrs. Smith thought her a representative of of the white-robed angels, who, with harps in hand, sing God's praise around the throne. From this time it was her practice to play as often as Mrs. Smith requested her to do so. In this peaceful haven Mary passed the days in tranquillity for more than a year, when Mrs. Benevolence called to see her.

Mrs. True, said she, I fear you are becoming hermitical. You will lose all interest in your race, unless you mingle with the world.

Mary answered that she was contented and had no desire to leave the place.

Do go home with me, urged Mrs. Benevolence, and stay a week or two; change of scene will affect you favorably.

At length Mary consented to go. The family of Mrs. Benevolence were noted for their cheerfulness and sociability, and, after a few days had passed, Mrs. Benevolence was pleased to observe that Mary was regaining her former lively habits. As we have said, she was versatile, and readily adapted herself to the society she was thrown among. The time passed so pleasantly that she forgot her intention of soon returning, and her visit was protracted to a month. The son and daughter of Mrs. B. were preparing to attend a ball, which was to be given in honor of a political victory, and they were untiring in their solicitations for Mary to accompany them. Mary refused to go, and they accused her of being unpatriotic. They would promise not to ask her to dance, and would return home at an early hour. Mrs. B. joined in the entreaty, and Mary accompanied them. She was not surprised that her former

friends had not called on her at her retreat, for she supposed it was generally understood that she had left the fashionable part of the city for the express purpose of obtaining retirement. Now that she had become more cheerful, she thought she would like to meet them again.

This evening will afford an opportunity, she said, as they will probably all be present at the ball.

Mrs. Experience called on Mrs. Benevolence. I heard, said she, that Mrs. True was here, has she returned home yet?

Oh, no, replied Mrs. Benevolence, she has gone to the ball.

I am sorry for that, said Mrs. Experience.

Mrs. True did not wish to go, said Mrs. Benevolence; but we all joined in persuading her to go, and finally overcame her reluctance.

She will not enjoy herself, said Mrs. Experience. You know that Mary has always received the most flattering attention at assemblies and all other places of public entertainment. She has been the centre of attraction at private parties and social circles. Even in the street, every one greeted her with the

blandest smiles, and most profound bows. Now she is comparatively poor, and all those attentions will cease. Mary is sensitive, and will feel more deeply wounded, because she does not expect it. She knows nothing of human nature; how could she? for she has always enjoyed prosperity until recently. The rich know no more about the character and disposition of mankind, than we should know of the faces of our friends, had we always seen them with masks on. Her aunt had a superior mind, and taught her to respect worth more than wealth, and she has no idea of falling in public esteem, because she is the victim of an unjust law. She will find those who courted and flattered her most, will be most cold and repulsive now.

Indeed, said Mrs. Benevolence, I did not think of that; I advised her to go, because I thought it would enliven her, and assist in bringing her out of that moody state, which I think must be injurious to her. My motive was good, I assure you.

Yes, said Mrs. Experience, your motives are always good, but you sometimes err in judgment.

The result proved as Mrs. Experience had fore-

told. Mary returned from the ball with a forsaken look, as though she had no friend in the wide world. The following day she insisted on being carried back to her retreat. Mr. Smith met her at the door with a hearty welcome; and when she entered, Mrs. Smith exclaimed;

I thank God, my dear, that you have returned! I have been very sick during your absence, and was afraid I should not live to see you return. Promise me, my dear, that you will not leave me again. I have not long to stay in this world, and while I do remain, I want my loved ones around me.

I thank you, my dear Mrs. Smith, replied Mary, if you knew how rejoiced I am to return to your beloved home, you would not deem a promise necessary. I think that your home, when compared with the rest of the world, is a heaven below.

I am glad to hear you say so, said Mrs. Smith; but did you not find the family of Mrs. Benevolence agreeable?

Oh yes, she replied, very agreeable and kind, I shall always love them; and they were very kind to bring me back when I requested them to do so; but

when we had gained an eminence which overlooks the city, I said, farewell vain world, once more and forever, farewell.

I am glad, said Mrs. Smith. I was fearful you would become so attached to city life, that you would become alienated from us.

No, cried Mary, far from it, the world has nothing to bestow;

> "'Tis from myself my joys must flow,
> And this dear place my home."

When the excitement of her return was over, and Mary was alone in her own room, her thoughts returned to her adventures at the ball. The indifference and coldness of some, the scornful looks of others, and the whispering and giggling of many of those who had been her most intimate friends, pained her deeply. These reflections produced no feeling of hatred or bitterness in her heart; the sensation or emotion was contempt. She thought how differently she would have treated an acquaintance under similar circumstances. The treatment she had received, instead of humbling her, served to in-

crease her self-esteem, for she felt within herself an innate principle far above it and those who were once her most abject of flatterers. Time rolled on, and Mary daily thanked God that he had raised up friends to cheer her lonely life. She was grateful to him for books, for, in perusing those, she held communion with the good and great of all nations and all ages. She thanked him for the starry firmament, for she understood the geography of the heavens, and took delight in tracing the orbits of the heavenly bodies. But Mary's tranquillity was doomed to be of short duration. Whether the goddess of fortune frowned at her birth, or some evil genius presided over her destiny, we have no means of ascertaining; but it seemed that a strange fatality pursued her relentlessly. The failure of a bank in which her money was placed reduced her to absolute poverty. This distressed her more than our feeble pen can describe, for the idea of dependence was galling to her lofty spirit. To return to the city, to seek employment, and mingle in the bustle and din of the noisy crowd, exposed to all the disadvantages she had so often observed with pity, in the

condition of homeless females, seemed to her worse than martyrdom. To one of her retiring disposition and quiet habits, nothing could be more repugnant.

Do not feel so unhappy, said Mrs. Smith. We are blessed with an abundance, and you are perfectly welcome to share it with us. You have been very kind to me. When you were paying your way, your kind attentions to me more than cancelled our mutual obligations. How could I get along in my feeble state without you? And then when I am no more, how desolate would be this house to poor Mr. Smith, without you. Eunice is here to be sure, but she is no company for my husband. She is a good domestic, and I hope she will continue here, as it will be necessary for his sake, as well as hers, for she has no other home. But you, my dear Mary, must be as a daughter to him; and I assure you, you will not be forgotten in his will.

Mary expressed the gratitude she felt so earnestly that Mrs. Smith checked her, by saying, It is us who have cause to thank you, for consenting to remain with us. The sinking spirit longs for a tender friend on whom it can lean till the last; one on whom it

can depend to cheer its homeward flight. Thus was Mary provided for, though she had lost all means of independent support. She felt that she was useful, and therefore was not unhappy. At length the hour of Mrs. Smith's departure arrived; and as her husband sat weeping by her bedside, she looked calmly up and said,

My dear husband, I must leave you, but I thank God that I leave you not alone. How often have we regretted that we were not blessed with children to comfort us in life's decline, to smooth the pillow of sickness, and to perform the last sad rites when we should be called hence, to be here no more forever. But God, who was able of stones to raise up children unto Abraham, has raised up children unto us, where we least expected it. They have been as daughters unto me, they will be as daughters to you, and I doubt not you love them as children, and will be to them as an affectionate father.

Mary was too solemnly impressed by the parting scene to observe the dark frown which clouded the brow of Eunice as Mrs. Smith uttered these words; for she had supposed when Mary was no longer

needed as a nurse, she would seek another home, and she would be left sole mistress of the establishment. The pastor of the place on hearing that Mrs. Smith was dying, came with his wife to administer religious consolation. He interrogated the dying woman in regard to her feelings in view of the dark valley she was about to enter. She answered, that she felt like a weary child sinking to slumber on its mother's breast. She requested them to sing, when the minister, his lady, and Mary joined in singing the appropriate hymn,

"How blessed the righteous when he dies."

As they ceased, Mr. Smith said, She has gone; the spirit has taken its flight. They looked upon the lifeless clay, and spoke of the holy calm which pervaded its features. The minister offered a prayer for the afflicted family and left, but his lady remained to shroud the dead in the habiliments of the grave. The neighbors kindly offered their assistance, and made preparations for the funeral. . . . When all was over and Mary returned from the burial the house looked desolate, and her heart was

doubly desolate. She felt that her last friend was no more; henceforth, she exclaimed, the world will be a dreary waste, and I a lonely pilgrim. Eunice was in great perturbation of mind. The disclosure of the arrangement that Mary was to continue in the family with all the rights and privileges which she herself possessed, was more than her selfish nature could bear. When the remains of Mrs. Smith had been prepared for the coffin, and Eunice found time to go to her own room, she gave vent to her indignation.

It is pretty well, I should think, that I have been drudging here these twelve years, in doors and out, hiding all my faults and straining every nerve and faculty to please, because uncle and aunt had no children, and I knew their property would fall to somebody. Now this thing has put herself in the way of all my plans. She came here first with nice pretensions; she was a lady boarder, but it soon turned that she was a beggar boarder. I guess she will find uncle will not be a very affectionate father to her if I can prevent it.

But now that there was no more nursing to be

done, Mary evinced a disposition to assist Eunice in the household duties. In the morning when she was engaged in the kitchen, Mary acted as chamber-maid; at noon, while she was preparing their food, Mary assisted in setting the table. She ironed the starched clothes from week to week, and attended to all the sewing in the house. She did it all with such kindness, and evinced such a sisterly interest in all Eunice's affairs, that she partially smothered the flame of hate which otherwise would have burst forth into a conflagration.

Mr. Smith had been a widower about a month, when the widow Gray said she was impressed that it was her duty to visit the poor afflicted old gentleman. She commenced making preparations for the visit by trying on all her dresses to see which was the most becoming. She thought the dark green silk was decidedly the most beautiful material, but the black alpine was better fitted to her form. After mature deliberation, she determined to array herself in the alpine dress. She next proceeded to examine her caps, but on this point she remained in suspense some time; for the prettiest cap happened to be

trimmed with very dull ribbon, and that which was not becoming was trimmed with beautiful ribbon. She finally took the trimming off of both and adorned the pretty cap with the beautiful ribbon. The cap being complete, she proceeded to adjust it to her head in such a manner as to conceal her gray locks, but in this she failed. The treacherous braids would slip from it in spite of all her efforts. After a vast deal of anxiety and perplexity, her toilet was completed. She then went to the house of Mr. Smith, but finding the females only at home, she felt very dull and moody. As they were sitting down to tea Mr. Smith returned, and immediately proceeded to occupy his place at the table. A change came over the old lady at once. She became very talkative and agreeable immediately, and even assumed girlish airs. Tea being over, Mary and Eunice retired to the kitchen with the tea-dishes, when the widow seated herself beside Mr. Smith.

I came up this afternoon, she said, to see if we could make a trade. I have an excellent cow which you may have almost on your own terms. She is a gentle creature, and I think she would be a great addition to your comfort.

How old is she? asked Mr. Smith.

This reference to the age of the animal rather disconcerted the widow Gray. She answered that although the cow was not young, still she was not much impaired by age. Mr. Smith said he should like to purchase a young cow, but he had no desire for an old one.

Well, said she, if you will call at my place, we will consult together about it. I should like to dispose of all my property, for I assure you, Mr. Smith, it is a great care for a lone woman to have the care of so much property. I find it is a poor house that has no man in it.

Mary now returned, and the conversation changed to another topic. The widow Gray returned home, not much flattered with the result of her visit, but she kept herself in trim for a month hoping that Mr. Smith would call to negotiate for the cow. One day as she set at her window, she saw the widow Black go by leading her little son. She is going up to Mr. Smith's undoubtedly, said the widow Gray; silly creature that she is, to think a rich man like Mr. Smith would notice her. Why, she has merely

sufficient means to live from day to day. But she is so conceited, thinks her teeth are so even, and her hair so black; but her complexion is half as dark as her hair. And she thinks it looks interesting to be seen leading that little boy; she knows Mr. Smith is very fond of children. It always makes me angry to see poor folks trying to creep after the rich.

The widow Black was received by Mary with the same courtesy which characterized her manner to all, both rich and poor. As Mr. Smith was chatting with the ladies the little boy climbed on his knee, and after playing with his whiskers awhile, he lisped out, ma told me to say I wish I had a pa. Mr. Smith pretended not to understand, but casting a glance at the widow Black, he thought the blush which o'erspread her face, caused her to resemble a painted squaw. After this she seemed ill at ease, and soon took leave of them. As soon as she was quite away from the house, she said, You little simpleton, why did you tell Mr. Smith that I told you to say that you wanted a pa? Why, ma, you did tell me to say so; have you forgotten it? I told you to say you wanted a pa, not that I wanted

you to have a pa. You are a little blunderhead, and always get things wrong. I wa'n't to blame, ma, for I thought you did want me to have a pa, or you would have said nothing about it.

A year after these events, a meeting-house was dedicated in the vicinity of Mr. Smith's residence. After the services, Mrs. Benevolence called to pass the remainder of the afternoon with Mary. When they were alone, Mrs. Benevolence said,

I have wanted to talk with you on a delicate subject, but I fear you will think me meddlesome or too inquisitive.

I know you are my sincere friend, replied Mary, and some one has truly said, that speaking with a friend is thinking aloud.

Well, then, my dear Mary, is it true that you contemplate marriage with Mr. Smith?

It is true that I have thought of it, answered Mary.

And do not your feelings revolt at the idea of becoming the wife of a man old enough to be your father?

It is a principle with me, said Mary, to be gov-

erned by duty, not by feeling. I owe Mr. Smith a debt of gratitude. Where would I have been to-day were it not for his generosity?

In the city, I suppose, said Mrs. Benevolence, following some respectable employment. You were never one of our doll ladies, and when you were worth thousands of dollars, you were useful from principle. We have often expressed our surprise that one of your independent nature and energetic character should immure yourself in this solitude with no society but an old man and an uncultivated domestic. I selected this place for you because I thought it would be more congenial to your feelings during the period of excessive grief, never doubting but you would again come forth. We expected by this time to see you married to some smart young man.

No, answered Mary, I am bankrupt in love, and would prefer never again to marry. I love Mr. Smith with the affection of a daughter.

I should think it a great sacrifice of feeling, remarked Mrs. Benevolence, to enter into the bonds of matrimony with my father.

But if duty demanded it, said Mary, you would make the sacrifice. When fortune and friends had forsaken me, here I found sympathy and refuge. When the dark shades of adversity thickened around me, I was cheered here by a ray of sunshine.

Yes, replied Mrs. Benevolence, but at that time you were under the influence of grief and disappointment. Now that time has somewhat subdued your sorrows, why not return to the city? You are yet young and interesting, and I doubt not would again become prosperous and happy.

Do not urge me, my dear Mrs. Benevolence, returned Mary; for I have tried the world and found it false. Its pleasures are vain, its friendships heartless, and its inhabitants selfish. Besides, I promised Mrs. Smith on her death-bed I would never forsake her husband.

You promised to be a daughter to him, but it never occurred to her that you would become his wife.

No, said Mary, I presume not, for the thought did not occur to me, and I was never more surprised than when he made the proposal.

I tell you, Mary, that these old men are selfish, as well as the rest of the world, said Mrs. Benevolence, and take advantage of circumstances.

I cannot think, replied Mary, that Mr. Smith is selfish. He has always seemed remarkably disinterested. He is intelligent and well informed, with a good disposition.

But the disparity in your ages is great, said Mrs. Benevolence; youth and age seldom assimilate.

The disparity is not so great as you think, answered Mary, for my heart is prematurely old. The young, the gay, the hopeful are no company for me. The enchantments of fancy have ceased, and life has lost its novelty. Mr. Smith is not very old. Time has calmed his passions, but it has not obscured his judgment. We can talk together of the loved and the lost ones, and appreciate each other's feelings. We can converse of the vicissitudes of life, and the emptiness of human applause and fame.

Well, Mary, said Mrs. Benevolence, I have only to say if you do marry Mr. Smith I hope it may be a happy union, but I have doubts and fears. Pardon me, my dear, for having spoken thus plainly,

perhaps you think I have intruded my advice. If I have erred in this, it is my solicitude for your welfare, which has drawn me into the fault.

Mr. Smith now entered, and, after a little general conversation, Mrs. Benevolence returned home. She felt dissatisfied in regard to Mary's prospects, and she said, I will go to-morrow and see Mrs. Experience; her opinion I have ever found to be correct. . . . On the following morning she visited Mrs. Experience, when, after the usual ceremony, and a few remarks on the weather, she inquired of that lady if she was aware that Mrs. True intended marriage with Mr. Smith.

I have heard nothing of it, she replied, but I suspected rumors to that effect were afloat. I went to the dedication yesterday, and drew the inference from what I saw there.

What did you see there to excite suspicion? inquired Mrs. Benevolence. Mrs. True was there, I know, but Mr. Smith was not with her.

No, replied Mrs. Experience, but I judged from the appearance of those who were there. I assure

you it gave me unpleasant sensations when, during the singing, I observed Mary standing as if wrapped in devotion; and there was the old widow Gray on one side of the house and the widow Black on the other, looking daggers at her. But tell me, is it possible she is going to be married to Mr. Smith?

I think she is, answered Mrs. Benevolence. I was there yesterday and talked with her on the subject. She would rather not marry again, but the Smiths were very kind to her when she was friendless and alone, which causes her to be bound by a sense of gratitude. Besides, she is strongly attached to the place. She moves through that lonely old castle with as resigned and thoughtful a look as if she were a willing exile. Indeed, she told me that she shrank from society.

The reason for that is the trouble and mental anguish she has been called upon to endure, said Mrs. Experience. Her first husband was a worthy man; he had great penetration and remarkable foresight. Then Edwin True was exactly calculated to gain and retain the love of a true woman. His sud-

den death, with the succession of misfortunes which followed, have broken her spirits. She had no friend to sustain her and she longed for solitude.

She expressed to me those feelings, answered Mrs. Benevolence, about the time old Mr. True took away her property. For that reason, I suggested to her the idea of boarding at Mrs. Smith's, because they lived in such seclusion. I did not suppose she would contract an inalienable friendship for the family.

Neither would she have done so, said Mrs. Experience, if Mrs. Smith had been well. There is a strong sympathy between the body and mind. She being sick, her mind in consequence was weak and childish, and she longed for some one to love and pet her. She ceased not to regret that she had no children to cheer her lonely lot. When Mary entered the family, her compassionate disposition taught her to soothe and comfort Mrs. Smith all in her power. Such attentions were so consoling to the declining woman, that she fancied Mary was sent by an especial Providence. Then the great ball which followed our last president's election; you know you

had induced Mary to attend with your family. Having consented to go, she began to anticipate pleasure in meeting all her friends together. It had never occurred to her that she could cease to be esteemed, but by ceasing to deserve it. To most persons who meet with a reverse of fortune, the conviction that they have fallen in the estimation of the world comes gradually, as they chance to be thrown among their acquaintances individually and at different times. One repulse prepares the mind for another. By degrees they learn the painful fact that the world's esteem is not founded on merit, but riches. But Mary had just immerged from her retreat, and had met with none of her summer friends since misfortune had overtaken her. Seeing them all on this occasion, and meeting with a general repulse, was like a thunderbolt to her sensitive heart. She made a hasty retreat to the hermitage with a firm resolve never to return. Meanwhile, Mrs. Smith had become worse, and missing her ministering angel from her bedside, she lived between hope and fear. She feared Mary would become so attached to your animated family circle that she would not return.

Then she would reflect; if God had sent Mary to cheer her last days, he would not suffer her to forsake the task; and when Mary returned, the heart of Mrs. Smith arose in gratitude, and she cried, I thank God, my dear, that you have returned. This cordial welcome after the feeling of utter desolation which had held possession of Mary's heart since the evening of the ball was like water to the thirsty soul. It served to attach her still more strongly to the family and their home. It was like returning to a peaceful haven after a tempestuous voyage. Her promise, also, to the dying woman that she would remain in the family, Mary considers sacred. Now the old gentleman has sufficient shrewdness to take advantage of these combined circumstances to secure to himself a young wife.

She will get along very well at present, said Mrs. Benevolence, as long as she is his pet, but by the time she has reached life's meridian, he will be infirm, imbecile, and troublesome. And she will be obliged to pass her best days in nursing an old man in his second childhood.

If that were all, remarked Mrs. Experience, I

should not object to the union, for they have ample means which renders all things easy; but there is a saying that every house has a skeleton in it, and there is one in that house which will surely destroy its peace. When it is too late, she will find the weak and unprotected must suffer from the selfishness and depravity of human nature, whether they are amid the hum of the city or the shades of retirement. Eunice, who has been there so long, and in whom Mr. Smith places implicit confidence, is a sly, subtle creature. I knew her years ago, before she went to Mr. Smith's; and her character is better defined by "snake in the grass," than any other term. When interest requires it, she assumes the garb of an angel; but when aught clashes with interest, she has the spirit of a fiend. She has been there a long time, practicing every art to gain the confidence of Mr. and Mrs. Smith; and she has succeeded. Her hope is to receive the property by his will, but if Mary marries him, she will be disappointed, which will cause a bitter enmity. I have dark forebodings with regard to Mary. With all the sorrow and suffering which she has been called upon to endure, I fear her most thorny path is yet untravelled.

CHAPTER V.

MARY'S THIRD MARRIAGE AND SICKNESS.

BRIGHT summer had sped away, and autumnal leaves were falling, when Mary stood once more before the altar, awaiting the nuptial ceremony. As the minister proceeded, the rain fell in torrents, the wind blew a hurricane, and the thunder muttered in the distance as if the voice of Heaven forbid the bans. At the moment they were pronounced husband and wife, a clap of thunder shook the house to its very foundation. The peal was loud and long, as if all the artillery of heaven were at once discharged. Mary trembled excessively. She was not superstitious, yet the raging elements seemed to be a dark omen. A little before midnight the rain ceased, and they commenced their ride homeward.

Mr. Smith was not an expert horseman, and Mary was in great fear lest she should be upset. The

earth was muddy, the atmosphere damp and chilly, and the gusts of wind which moaned through the naked forest, sounded like the wail of nature for the dying year. Thus in the solemn silence of midnight they slowly wended their way, and at length came in view of their own residence. The faint moon-beams were now throwing a misty light over its gray walls, but all within was darkness. The gloomy old mansion, the desolation of nature, the hour and its associations, all combined to create melancholy thought. A presentiment of evil filled her mind; she thought this an emblem of her future life,—dark, cold, and desolate. Her mind recurred to the evening when, with confiding love and bright visions of future bliss, she gave her hand to the noble youth who had won her heart. The decorated apartments, the deluge of light, the numerous company of smiling ladies and bowing gentlemen, all ardently wishing them future joy and happiness. The contrast was so striking she sank back in the carriage, overcome by her own painful emotions. They soon arrived at their own door, and Mary descended from the carriage with trembling limbs.

Mr. Smith uttered an exclamation of surprise that Eunice had extinguished the lights, and, on attempting to open the door, to his astonishment he found it locked. He rang the bell; but no one appeared. There was no sound from within, all was silent as the tomb.

Mr. Smith left Mary shivering on the door-step, and went around to the back part of the house, but with no better success; the back doors were bolted. He rapped with the butt of his whip, but naught save echo answered. He then tried the window in vain.

Mr. Smith was not a passionate man, his nerves were firm, and he was not often excited. Mary had never seen him angry before; but this dilemma threw him into a violent rage. He let forth such a volley of oaths that Mary felt the blood curdle in her veins; her limbs refused to support her, and she fell to the earth. It was a singular spectacle; the evening bride prostrate, at dead of night, on the cold wet ground; the bride-groom raving around his own dwelling, ringing at this door, thumping at that, and hallooing at each window, with a force which made night hideous.

Had a nocturnal traveller been abroad he would have supposed some maniac had escaped from confinement. But no human ear save Mary's heard the appalling sounds, and no eye looked upon that scene. The cold pale moon alone looked down upon it, and immediately veiled her face in a dark cloud. At length there was a tremendous crash, which operated on Mary like an electric shock. With one bound she regained her feet, and catching hold of the carriage, she clung to it for support. Mr. Smith, being driven to desperation, had smashed in a back window, and effected an entrance. He hastened to the front door, but there was no key in the lock. Unbolting the back door he bustled around the house, and seizing Mary he carried her in, very much as an enraged cat handles a subdued mouse. She staggered to a lounge, and sank upon it; while Mr. Smith struck a light and kindled the fire. The next movement was to solve the mystery about Eunice. He went to her chamber; no one was there, and her bed had not been occupied during the night. He was utterly amazed, for he had never known Eunice to deviate from the path of

duty. Mary, who of late had noticed innumerable frowns and flirts, suspected some trick, but said nothing of it to Mr. Smith.

The truth was, she had left the house half an hour after Mr. Smith and Mary started to be married. Mary had told her in confidence the object of their ride, and it had aroused all the serpent's venom and spite to rankle in her heart. She went to the widow Gray's. They have gone to be married, she said. This intelligence did not affect the widow much, for she had long been convinced that Mr. Smith had no desire to purchase her cow.

Yes, they have gone to get married, and they may roost on the hen-coop to-night if they like, for I have fastened up the house as tight as a bottle. They will not get into it, unless they creep down the chimney, and I don't think *that* will improve their complexions in the least.

Widow Gray applauded the trick, and they chuckled over it in fiendish glee. The following morning she arose at an early hour, and wended her way home. Mr. Smith met her in the door, and

sternly demanded what she meant. She affected surprise to find them at home.

Why, said she, I had no idea you would return in that thunder-storm. I illuminated the parlor and lighted the front chamber, and had just begun to prepare for an excellent supper when the storm commenced. And, Mr. Smith, I am dreadfully afraid of thunder; it terrifies me, and seems to paralyze all my powers. Of course, I should not have left the house if I had not supposed you would tarry all night.

This explanation reconciled Mr. Smith, and nothing more was said on the subject. Mary had suffered so much from exposure and mental excitement, that on this morning she found herself unable to sit up. Now every joint shook with chills, which were soon followed by a burning fever. Mr. Smith proposed sending for a physician, but she objected, saying, I will try simple remedies to-day, and see if they will effect a cure.

The next day she became much worse, and a physician was called. She suffered extremely for

three weeks, when the fever turned, leaving her in a feeble state, in body and mind. Mr. Smith was willing to do whatever he was requested to restore Mary to health, but he evinced no solicitude. His first wife had been an invalid so long that it produced but little sensation to see a sick woman in the house. Oh how Mary longed for a sympathizing friend to sit by her bedside and beguile the weary hours! With such thoughts in her mind, and such feelings in her heart, she sank to sleep and fancied that Edwin was hovering around her couch. In the excess of her joy, she reached forth her arms toward him with a vehemence which awoke her, and she wept like a child that it was but a dream. Gradually she gained strength, and her mind became more firm. The doctor advised walking in the open air every fine day. This Mary did with great benefit to her health and spirits, for in her rambles she met with much to divert her mind and interest her feelings, and she usually returned with a glow on her cheek and a sparkle in her eye.

CHAPTER VI.

OLD MRS. POOR.

One day she had returned from her usual walk, when she asked Eunice,

Who is it that lives in a little black house near the woods?

Where, asked Eunice, at the end of the cross-road that runs through the fields?

Yes, answered Mary.

Oh, said Eunice, old mother Poor lives there, or rather she stays there. I guess she don't live much.

Is she very poor, inquired Mary.

I should think so from appearances, replied Eunice. I never was in her house, but I have often been in the surrounding fields picking strawberries, and have seen the old woman in her garden at work. She is as pale as a ghost, and looks like a bundle of bones tied up. I think she is a consumptive, for she leans upon her hoe and coughs every few minutes.

What supports her, asked Mary.

Her garden, I suppose, returned Eunice, she has no other dependence. People give her a little something now and then, and there is Mrs. Benevolence who is always poking her nose into every den of misery; she goes out there every time she comes this way.

I never heard her say anything about it, answered Mary.

Oh, no, said Eunice, she is too proud for that. She is ashamed for you to know what sort of company she keeps. The next time she calls here, you will have an opportunity of watching her carriage on her return home, as I have done many a time from the attic window, and you will see when she reaches that cross-road, she will turn in that direction. It must be that she goes to old mother Poor's, for there is no other house on that road.

I think you are mistaken, Eunice, said Mary. Mrs. Benevolence is not ashamed to be seen relieving the sufferings of her fellow creatures; but she heeds the injunction of our Saviour, and "lets not her left hand know what her right hand doeth."

But how came you to wander off there, said Eunice; I should rather by far walk in the main road to the lively part of the city. You would meet splendid horses and carriages, elegant gentlemen and fashionable ladies; and if you should happen to feel smart, you might walk far enough to get a sight of the fine houses.

Those things do not interest me, said Mary, I love the solitude and silence of nature.

In summer, said Eunice, there might be some excuse for such nonsense, but there is no nature there now.

Yes, said Mary, following the little winding path which runs through the wood just beyond Mrs. Poor's, one finds decayed nature all around, which seems to inspire a pleasant melancholy. It is an emblem of earthly hopes and prospects, and of the final destiny of all mankind. The winter birds too, which meet the eye, suggest to the mind the refreshing and consoling idea of true friends, who forsake us not, though the storms of adversity howl around us.

The first part of your moral is evident, said Eunice, but I never saw birds of any kind around

the poor, for the simple reason, that there are no scattered crumbs to be picked up. For instance, you never see birds around old mother Poor's door-yard, nor callers entering her door, for neither would gain anything by it. Human beings and animals are more alike than is generally supposed. Some ten years ago uncle had a fine field of grass, which was surrounded by a brush fence, and I shall never forget how vexed I used to be with the neighbor's cattle. They would gather here from all directions and break through the fence in spite of us. But when uncle made a substantial rail-fence, and the cattle found it to be impossible to get through, we saw no more of them. The brutes never even said good-by, nor thanked us for the grass they had devoured. It was just the same with Aunt Smith's friends. Before she began to decline, she used to like to make all kinds of preserves. Every kind of berry and fruit that grew were boiled in sugar and stowed away, and cake too. Every week I had to beat eggs for cake until my elbows ached. Aunt having no children to employ her time, it seemed a sort of relief, and served to kill time to work over

such things. And such flocks of visitors as we used to have. Seldom a day in the week passed but we had somebody to wait upon, and often half a dozen at a time. Aunt was pleased with it, and thought she was respected more than others, because she had more company. But when she became too sick to make rich cake and preserves, their visits became few and far between. Poor aunt, it grieved her sorely that her friends (as she had called them) should be so negligent, when it would be such a comfort if they would but drop in and sit with her awhile.

What you assert, answered Mary, is too true; but there are exceptions to all general rules. There is Mrs. Benevolence, for instance, may justly be compared to the winter bird; and, undoubtedly, there are others of the same spirit. They are very few, indeed, when compared with the mass of mankind, and their deeds of charity are performed so silently, and with so little ostentation, that the world hardly knows of their existence.

CHAPTER VII.

EUNICE'S INTRIGUES.

THUS Mary and Eunice sat conversing on various subjects. They seldom agreed in opinion, because their minds were cast in different molds. Eunice had been quite kind since Mary's sickness, but there was a selfish reason for it. While Mary was sick, Eunice had sent a letter to her country relations, requesting them to come with a horse and carriage, and arrange the visit so as to return in the evening. Eunice received an answer, that it was not convenient for them to come immediately, but they would come the next week. She then selected such household articles as she thought would not be missed. A part of the table and bed linen, a few woollen blankets, a large silver spoon, and three silver teaspoons. She then ripped open the beds and helped herself to feathers. I have worked hard enough here (she said to herself), and ought to have the

whole. These articles she concealed, until her relations had made their visit, when they were conveyed away under cover of night. Now that Mary was fast regaining her health, and would soon resume her usual occupation about the house, Eunice feared the theft would be detected, and reach the ears of her uncle, for above all things she dreaded to lose his confidence, knowing it would prostrate all her plans. She knew Mary's peace-loving disposition, and she thought to herself, I will be very kind to her, and win her affections, and then, if she does suspect anything wrong, she will not be so likely to mention it to uncle. The cotton and linen articles I will say some part of them were blown away by the fall winds, and the rest the washerwoman must have stolen. But I do not know what I shall say about the feathers; I will say nothing, and I guess those will not be missed, for she is not very observing about common affairs. When she is not talking she appears abstracted, as if her mind was elsewhere.

Mr. Smith was sitting on the sofa one evening, and Mary seated herself by his side and entered

into a lively conversation. He conversed a little, but seemed uninterested. Mary thought of her harp, and with what pleasure Edwin used to listen as she played while seated by his side at the evening hour. She reasoned thus with herself: Mr. Smith is now my husband, and it is my duty to try to render him happy. She took her harp, and, reseating herself by her husband, she played an animating air. She continued to play, for Mr. Smith sat perfectly silent, which did not surprise her, for Edwin had been used to sit as if spell-bound by the power of her musical skill. She ceased, and cast a glance at her husband, as if to meet his approving smile, when lo, the old gentleman was sound asleep. The harp dropped from her hand, and with her head bent forward on her bosom, she sat lost in thought. At length she rose with a sigh, and with slow steps ascended to her room. As she passed through the hall, the remark of Mrs. Benevolence recurred to her mind, and she unconsciously uttered it aloud; "youth and age seldom assimilate." Eunice, who happened to be in her bed-room, overheard the expression.

What is that she is muttering about youth and

age, she said, I am glad I heard it. I have an idea to put in uncle's ear, if there is anything said about the feathers.

Thus did this wicked creature act the spy, watching the words and actions of innocent and unsuspecting Mary, hoping to glean something in which to found an accusation. Soon after these events Mary returned to her former round of domestic duties. She had observed the beds were flat, but had supposed Eunice to have lost her skill in that branch of household business, in consequence of not having practiced it. But now the truth became evident. It was a painful thought to her just and upright mind, that there was a member of her family who could be guilty of such an act. The evidence was before her, she could not shut her eyes to the fact. The ticks had been made with black linen thread, but about a quarter of a yard had been ripped open in each tick, and sewed up again with brown linen, precisely such as they were then using about the house. She thought it her duty to inform Mr. Smith, but she dreaded doing so, for she knew it would create discord in the family. Finally, she

concluded to let the matter rest for the present, and if she detected nothing more of the kind in future, to let it rest forever.

But as is usually the case with the guilty, Eunice could not let the matter rest. She observed Mary very sharply, and found her to be cool and reserved, whereas their intercourse had been very free. This convinced Eunice that Mary was in the secret, which aroused all the demons of mischief in her heart. She has not told uncle yet, thought she, I know by his treating me the same as ever, but I doubt not that she will some time. But I will get the start of her; I will artfully insinuate to uncle that she is deceitful, and after some seeming proofs of this, I will gradually impress him that she will lie. Then I can do what I like in spite of her, and uncle will doubt every word she says. Then there is old mother Benevolence, she will be here as soon as the sleighing is good, and they will have a long private talk as they always do, and Mary will let the whole out to her, I dare say, with an injunction to secrecy. But the old woman will tell her daughters, and they will tell their intimate friends, and they will tell

their mothers, and so it will go through the whole community. But I will be beforehand with her. I will contrive to disgrace her abroad also. Yes, I am determined to put her down completely, then no one will believe her story. I shall take delight in tormenting her, for she has no business to poke herself in here. But whatever may be said or done, she shall never suspect that I am at the bottom of the trouble; for I will treat her with so much kindness, that she will think I love her as a sister. Sometime when it will work in nicely I will allude to aunt's dying request that we should live together like sisters.

About this time a club of literary young men formed a debating society. Their meetings were held in a school-house, a quarter of a mile from Mr. Smith's residence. The public were invited to attend, and Mr. Smith and his wife went. Mary became interested in the debate, and wished to go every week.

Mr. Smith said he highly approved of debating. It drew forth the talents of young men, strengthened the reasoning powers, and the audience are in-

formed and improved. If Mary wished to go, he had no objections, but he did not wish to attend himself. At the approach of evening he was weary, and preferred his arm-chair, or to retire early to bed.

Accordingly, Mary went alone, leaving Eunice with the old gentleman, thus giving her a fine opportunity to execute her plan. One evening when Mary was preparing to go to the debate, Eunice was very attentive. She assisted in putting on her cloak, tied her comforter, and expressed concern that she would take cold. As soon as she was gone, Eunice said to Mr. Smith, I think Mary is imprudent, going out so much alone in the evening. If she thinks no harm, others will. The eyes of the world are always fixed on a young woman who is married to an elderly person, and there is in every community more or less profligate fellows, who think it a silent invitation to them.

The countenance of Mr. Smith changed at this remark, and he made no reply, but sat as if in deep thought. On the following Sabbath, when Mary had gone to church, and Mr. Smith was sitting in his arm-chair as usual, Eunice entered the bed-room

that joined the sitting-room leaving the door open. After passing around a short time, as if adjusting the furniture, she commenced patting the bed, talking the while as if to herself, but in a voice so loud that she knew her uncle would hear. A pretty looking bed, I should think; as flat as a shingle, and so are all the beds in the house lately. Before she was married, she could make a bed as neatly as any one.

Mr. Smith pretended not to hear, but kept his eyes fastened on the book he was holding in his hand, but when the dinner hour approached, and Eunice was engaged in the kitchen, he looked at the beds. Eunice may well say the beds are flat, exclaimed he, but Mary can make beds well. Eunice thought it good policy to proceed slowly, and for a month she made no effort to impair Mr. Smith's confidence in his wife. . . .

One evening about midwinter, Mary, as usual, had gone to hear the debate, Eunice pretended to feel unwell, and retired to bed before Mary returned. Her sleeping apartment was directly over the front yard. The following morning when they

were all seated at the breakfast table, she asked Mary who she was talking with in the front yard last night. Mary replied, No one, I was not talking. Eunice cast a glance at her uncle, and saw the color mount to his face. She thought that enough for the present. Mr. Smith's manner toward Mary changed slightly. He had never spoken unkindly to her, and he now scarcely ever spoke a word. He would sit evening after evening without uttering a syllable, as if lost in deep thought. Mary often thought of the contrast in her situation when living with Edwin.

His exalted ideas, and refined expression, was a constant feast of reason and flow of soul. But now she felt doomed to an intellectual famine. The insipid talk of Eunice, the moody silence of Mr. Smith, rendered life monotonous to one of active temperament. But as Thurday evening approached she felt animated, and would start for the debate with an elastic step, knowing her mental powers would be stimulated and refreshed. Mr. Smith did not fail to observe this. He feared it was a bad omen. He did not like to see her so cheerful and light when

leaving home. It helped to confirm the suspicions Eunice had excited in his mind.

When Mary returned, she perceived the curtain half drawn, and Mr. Smith seated in the window. She was surprised, for he had usually been asleep long before that hour. He did not greet her with a smile, as he was wont to do when she entered, but maintained a sullen silence. Eunice noticed this, and was secretly pleased, and encouraged to proceed in her evil design.

Another week rolled around, and Mary again went to the little school-house. Eunice looked after her and said, she steps off quite smart. I guess she hopes to meet some one she can assimilate with, the deceitful creature. Mr. Smith spoke in a stern tone, Eunice, what do you mean by accusing Mary of deception. I have ever found her most sincere and truthful.

Well, uncle, if you want proof, look at our beds; trifles express character. Here they are, standing witnesses against her. While she had you in her eye, or rather your property in her eye, she could make a handsome bed, and pretend to good princi-

ples, and express pretty sentiments; but I often thought then she was too sweet to be wholesome. God forbid that I should produce hard feelings between husband and wife. But time will prove all things. I will say this much uncle, and you will find my words to be true, you thought you were taking a dove to your bosom, but you have embraced a poisonous serpent, that will sting you to death.

Eunice looked up, and saw that Mr. Smith's face was of a purple hue, and his features expressing great agony; but the next moment he was pale as a corpse. He attempted to speak, but his tongue refused distinct utterance, and produced a choking sound. Eunice did not comprehend the nature of his emotions, whether it was caused by jealousy of Mary, or anger towards herself for having spoken so strongly. She feared she had gone too far, therefore she retreated to the kitchen and remained there until Mr. Smith had retired to rest. She then prepared warm drink for Mary, and as soon as she entered, she said,

I have made you some ginger tea. The evening is so very cold I was afraid you would be chilled.

Thank you, said Mary, you are very kind.

It is the duty of sisters to be kind to each other, said Eunice. You know it was aunt's dying request that we should live together like sisters. And to speak freely, sister Mary, I feel drawn towards you more of late, since uncle is so changed.

I have noticed the change, replied Mary, but did not like to speak of it. Tell me, Eunice, what do you think is the cause?

It is age, I think, replied Eunice.

He is not so much older than he was a year ago, said Mary; he used to be good company.

Yes, said Eunice, but then he was courting, and when these old men have a young wife in view, it produces a sort of unnatural excitement, but after they have been married awhile, their spirits fall as far below the usual standard. This evening he has been irritable and fractious, and I was glad when I heard you coming, for I longed to hear a pleasant voice once more.

It is my opinion, said Mary, that he is unwell. This is an uncommon cold winter, and I think the intense cold has affected his nervous system.

On the following evening she steeped sage, and made warm drink for him, but Mr. Smith refused to take them, pettishly remarking that his wound was too deep to be healed by herb tea.

Mary did not understand the meaning of this lan-

OR DAY THIS YEAR
O BE LEGAL HOLIDAY

STER BAY, L. I., Aug. 12—Pres-
Roosevelt, Monday, issued the
ing executive order:
is hereby ordered that all per
employes and other day laborers
eral public service wherever em-
whose employ extends through
the first Monday in September,
only known as Labor day and set
as a national holiday for certain
es of the public service by the
June 25, A. D. 1894, be excused
work on said day and the said
declared to be a holiday for all
es for said per diem employes
borers.
"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

her that he must be a little
n the course of the week,
in regard to the debating
ere a set of vain fellows
ake a display of their fan-
o interest in the questions
be expected that school-
should run after them, but
who are familiar with the
ce and Rome should relish

thought lightly of the de-
attend no longer. She had
understood him to say he had no objection to her going.

Eunice was displeased with this arrangement, as it was more favorable to her plan for Mary to continue to go out. When the time approached, she resolved to irritate the old gentleman by insinuating that Mary was preparing to go. As she whispered in her uncle's ear, her fiendish heart exulted to see the marks of indignation overspread his countenance. She heard Mary's footsteps approaching, and slipped into the front entry to listen. As Mary entered, he said in loud and angry tones, Mary, what do you find so attractive in the old school-house, that you must go there again, now that you know it is against my will. It must be some young Demosthenes, whose persuasive eloquence you deem irresistible.

Mary was astonished, and she looked up to see if he was really in earnest, when the dark frown which hung on his brow revealed the storm raging within. Instantly the truth flashed on her mind. Mr. Smith's malady was jealousy. She rushed from the room and burst into a flood of tears.

Eunice, who had been listening in the entry and had heard all, said to Mr. Smith, Mary is crying

like a baby because you are opposed to her going to the debating club.

When Mary had become more composed, she concluded Eunice was right when she said his mind was wandering, for, said she, nothing but partial derangement could have caused such thoughts to enter his mind. She determined to go out no more, but to linger constantly by his side. She selected such books as she thought would interest him, and, seated on an ottoman at his feet, she read aloud. But when she closed the book, he continued as morose as before, making no remark on the subject of which she had been reading. She then endeavored to draw him into lively conversation, but was quickly repulsed by fractious replies.

Mary's situation was truly deplorable. Shut up in this gloomy old mansion with her most inveterate enemy, who was secretly operating on the mind of the man whom she had regarded as her best friend, thus causing alienation and bitterness. Cut off from all society, and from those public entertainments which serve to unbend the mind, she became dejected and melancholy. This gloomy winter, the

most hopeless that Mary had ever passed, wore slowly away. Green-robed spring with her genial breath and garlands of flowers again tripped o'er the earth.

Mr. Smith was in the yard one morning leaning thoughtfully on his cane, while Mary stood by his side contemplating the new-born beauty and life by which she was surrounded, when their family physician chanced to be driving by. He drove up in front of their gate and exchanged salutations.

Mrs. Smith, said he, you look miserable. You are suffering for air and sunshine. God is so good as to give us these great blessings gratuitously, yet half of us will not accept them.

You should be the last to complain, said Mary, our refusing to comply with the laws of health supplies your purse.

Yes, replied the Dr., more than half my practice is in consequence of this disregard of physical law. Half of our community are uninformed of the means of preserving health, but you, Mrs. Smith, who have made a study of the science of the laws of health, should know better. Spring out at the dawn

of day, take a long walk, inhale the fresh morning air, and the next time I ride this way I shall not see those sunken cheeks and dull eyes, but rosy cheeks, and a pair of diamonds.

Mary thanked him for his advice, and he bade them good morning and drove away.

CHAPTER VIII.

EUNICE'S BASE STRATEGY.

LET us take a walk to-morrow morning, said Mr. Smith.

I should enjoy it exceedingly, she answered.

On the following morning they started early, while the spring birds were singing their earliest notes.

Which way shall we go, asked Mr. Smith.

If you please, replied Mary, we will take the road which runs through the fields toward Mrs. Poor's. And, by the way, Mr. Smith, do you not think we had better take a few articles with us for the poor sickly woman?

Certainly, said Mr. Smith, if you are willing to take the trouble.

They returned from the walk refreshed and invigorated, and resolved to walk every morning. Several succeeding mornings Mr. Smith arose at an

early hour to walk with Mary, but at length he grew weary of the exercise; said it rendered the day too o ng and tedious; preferred his morning nap, and Mary, if she pleased, might walk alone.

Every fine morning, before the rising of the sun, Mary went forth to breathe the balmy fragrance of spring, and listen to the music of the groves. She always carried a present of some kind for old Mrs. Poor, and when she had deposited it on the old lady's window-sill, she sought the little path which ran through the woods. She soon discovered the path, and found herself embowered in a wilderness of blossoms. The rising god of day shot his golden arrows through the tangled greenwood, and showered a profusion of sparkling gems o'er nature's verdant mantle. The wild flowers expanded their dewy cups to receive his warm caress, while birds of every plumage raised the chorus of praise. Mary's heart warmed with an emotion to which it had long been a stranger, and she exclaimed with enthusiasm, Oh that sin should enter so fair a world! Surely naught is needed save universal love, to render this fair earth a heaven below. The glory and splendor

of inanimate, and the joy of animated nature, inspired the sentiment of devotion, and she kneeled in fervent prayer. As she arose from the attitude of humility, she seated herself on a moss-covered log, and joined the melodious concert.

"Yes, Jesus my Saviour oft deigned for to meet,
And bless with his presence my lovely retreat;
My heart swelled with rapture, as birds in the air
Sung anthems of praises as I went to prayer."

Mary returned from the woods and fields with renewed vigor of body and buoyant spirits.

Eunice looked on her with a malicious eye, and said to herself, "I did hope to wear the creature out, and come in mistress myself. She was entirely run down until these morning walks commenced, now she is as bright as a lark. But I will set my powers of invention at work, and see if I cannot put a stop to it." Eunice then commenced folding quite a number of packages of tea, sugar, rice, and crackers, with some other small articles. When evening had thrown its dark veil over the earth, she placed the packages in a small basket, which she took in her hand, and went forth into the darkness. She

passed the road which led to the house of old Mrs. Poor, and continued her walk a quarter of a mile further. Here she entered a store and bought a paper of pins, and other trifling articles, chatting familiarly with the clerk the while. Having made her purchase, she said to the young man, "I started this evening to carry a few articles to old Mrs. Poor. The old lady is in a suffering condition. I was told to-day, by one who knew, that she had caten nothing since yesterday; but when I got to the cross-road, it looked so dark and gloomy out that way, I did not dare to go. After hesitating some time, I thought of you. Perhaps for half a dollar you would carry this little basket out early in the morning. I fear the old woman will famish for want of food." While speaking she drew an American half dollar from her purse and laid it on the counter.

The youth replied, he had no customers for more than an hour after the store was opened in the morning, and could go without inconvenience.

If the old woman is not up, said Eunice, you may leave the basket on the window-sill, as she opens her window the first thing she does in the morning.

She then hastened homeward. On the following morning the sun arose in all his magnificence, but Mary, as usual, was up before him. As he appeared from his bed in the east, she was inhaling the health-giving odor of a thousand flowers. Little did she dream, in the innocence of her heart, that an intrigue was on foot to destroy her peace.

At an early hour Eunice stationed herself in the attic window, watching with intense interest. She soon saw the young man wending his way to the house of Mrs. Poor. She waited until he had disposed of the basket and she could discern his form in the distance on his return. She then hastened to her uncle's room, where he was yet locked in the arms of sleep. Catching him by the shoulder, with a violent shake and raised tone of voice, she cried, uncle, do jump up quick and dress yourself as fast as possible.

The old gentleman sprang up amazed at this disturbance of his morning nap, and, staring wildly at Eunice, he vociferated, what is the matter, is the house on fire?

No, she replied, worse than that.

Mr. Smith made one bound from the bed, and dressed himself with all possible dispatch.

Follow me to the attic, said Eunice, and see if you will believe your own eyes. You have accused me of unjust suspicions of Mary, but I told you time would reveal the truth. Do you see that young man coming out from the cross-road? I have seen him before more than once, but this morning I felt I could bear it no longer. A sense of duty urged me to arouse you, that you might see for yourself.

Mr. Smith was excessively agitated. With trembling hands he wiped his glasses and placed them on his eyes. There he stood, with his white head thrust from the lofty casement, gazing intently toward the cross-road. As he caught a glimpse of the clerk, every nerve and muscle wrought with a combination of torturing passions. He snatched his spectacles from his head and dashed them to the floor as he rushed from the attic almost insane. His rolling eyes darted fury, as with clenched fists he hurried from room to room. He threw himself on his bed and rolled from side to side. Then springing up with a terrible look and a bitter curse, he

called for his gun, swearing he would pursue the criminal and shoot him down in the road. Eunice thought her plan was working too far, and she ran up-stairs and locked the room containing the gun.

Do, uncle, sit down, said she, and compose yourself. I want to talk with you calmly. In the first case, it was wrong for you to marry Mary, for, as I overheard her say, "youth and age cannot assimilate."

When did you hear her say that, roared Mr. Smith. One evening last winter, Eunice replied. You know my room is over the front door, and, by leaving my window up a little, I could overhear all the affectionate conversation in the front yard.

Then the old gentleman went off into another fit of raving, just as Mary entered. The storm burst in all its violence and fury on the head of the confused woman, who was utterly astonished, and knew not the meaning of what she heard. An hour afterward, Eunice slipped out of the back door and started for the widow Gray's. . . .

Walk in, Eunice, said the widow, I am glad to see you; but what did you walk so fast for? you are all out of breath.

Oh, answered Eunice, I was in a hurry to tell you; they have had the greatest row up there this morning that ever I saw or heard.

What! asked the widow, who has had a row?

Uncle Smith and his wife, replied Eunice.

You surprise me, said the widow, I never heard they quarrelled.

How could you, said Eunice, when there is no one there to tell except me, and I have always kept still for the credit of the family; of course, I dreaded to disgrace my own. But there is a point when concealment ceases to be a virtue, and her conduct has become so outrageous, I think it my duty to expose it.

Why, Eunice! do tell all about it, said the widow Gray, don't keep me in suspense.

Well, then, said Eunice, I will begin at the first. Our lady, you know, was a pattern of modesty and excellence until she had managed to establish herself permanently by marriage with uncle. Shortly after the aspect of things was suspicious. She pretended to have a great relish for the debating society. She would go, and not return till past midnight.

Poor uncle, my heart used to ache for him; for when I was at rest I could hear him walking the floor, and every few minutes a groan would escape him. Finally, he forbid her going out evenings. She cried like a child about it, and settled down into a sort of melancholy. She felt discontented, you know, because she could not get out among her own sort. This spring she formed the habit of creeping slowly out of bed, before light in the morning, to wander off into the fields. This morning uncle watched her, and he detected her wandering through the woods with a dandy clerk. She had no idea of detection until she returned to the house, and then we were in the midst of noise and confusion.

How did she look? What did she do? eagerly inquired the widow Gray.

Oh, said Eunice, she tried to look strange as if she did not know what it meant; and at last she dropped on the floor and pretended to have a sort of hysterical fit. Uncle continued raving, and bustled off into the kitchen. I have a little green-hide to drive the cows with, and I thought he was after that, but he came back without it. It would have done

my soul good to have seen him shaking it over her. Not that I am her enemy, but because I know she deserves it.

The widow Gray tried to look doleful, said it was a great calamity, and she was very sorry for Mr. Smith. But it was plainly seen that her cold gray eye gleamed with a ray of satisfaction. Eunice bade the widow good morning, and hastened to call on the widow Black. The fictitious tale was again repeated, and the widow Black was eager to learn the particulars.

Whose clerk was he? she asked.

Uncle did not say, replied Eunice.

I did not like the looks of her, said the widow Black, when I visited at your house; I thought then she was a coquettish thing, and was trying to allure your uncle into matrimony.

It makes my heart ache, said Eunice, when I think how happy we used to live when aunt was with us; just as peaceable as the inmates of a dove-cote. But this creature has filled the house with discord and confusion. Good-by, Mrs. Black, I must hasten home, or I fear they will miss me.

She hurried homeward, but had not proceeded far when she overtook the widow Gray.

Are you going on a visit, Mrs. Gray? asked Eunice.

Oh, no, she replied, only going to call on Mrs. Scandal. Can you not call there too?

No, I thank you, answered Eunice, I must get home before I am missed. Please give my best respects to Mrs. Scandal, and tell her I shall call the next time I come this way.

CHAPTER IX.

THE PROGRESS OF SLANDER.

WHILE the widow Gray and Eunice were conversing, the widow Black was running across the fields to the house of Mrs. Tattle, to pour into her willing ears the welcome news. Mrs. Tattle was not a vicious woman, but she dearly loved excitement. She possessed by nature a very active mind, but it was unstored, and therefore she had no resources for profitable thought. When Mrs. Black arrived, Mrs. Tattle's family were seated at dinner; but with a slight beckon of the finger, and a knowing wink of the eye, she drew Mrs. Tattle aside, and held a secret session of half an hour. When the widow Black had departed, Mrs. Tattle was in a great flurry.

Here, Johnny, said she, you gather up the dinner dishes and stow them in the sink; then get the

broom and brush out the middle of the floor, for I am going down to Mrs. Gossip's.

Why, mother, said Johnny, are you going away down there? It is almost down to the city.

Yes, I know it is quite a walk, and I am in haste to get away.

But pa is going away; he said he wanted a clean shirt and stockings.

I know it, replied Mrs. Tattle, but his shirt is not ironed and his stockings need darning. Tell him Mrs. Gossip is sick, and sent for me.

Throwing on her bonnet and shawl she bustled away. She had not proceeded far when she stopped short, exclaiming, "mercy, I forgot the baby!" As she retraced her steps, she said to herself, what a shame it is that I should have so much care as to forget my own sucking child. Opening the door, she called out, Johnny, when the baby wakes don't forget to feed it.

Yes, mother, but is the food ready?

No, but you can mix it. Get the milk out of the tin pan; mix with one third water, and sweeten with white sugar. And do be careful that the little dear

don't spring out of your arms and hurt its spine, as poor little Charley did out of the arms of Biddy Careless.

In consequence of her excitement, she shut the door with more force than she was aware of, which aroused the sleeping infant, and Johnny abandoned the broom to prepare its dinner. He called his little sister, Emma, to amuse the child, while he repaired to the cellar for the milk. But behold, there were two tin pans of milk, and Johnny was at a loss to know which was the right one. He raised the covers and peeped in. Of course, said he, ma meant for me to give baby the best milk, and this looks thick and yellow; this must be the right one. That pan has only a thin scum on it, and cannot be good. Accordingly he dipped the milk from the pan with the thick scum. Having ascended from the cellar he procured a pitcher of water, and stood holding it in his hand. "I wonder how much water mother intended for me to put in."

Water, cried Emma, ma did not mean for you to water our milk; she is not a step-mother.

I think she told me to water it, replied Johnny.

Oh, no, said Emma, do you not remember how pa talked about Mrs. Stingy for watering the children's milk? He said it was because she was their step-mother. So you see, Johnny, none but step-mothers water milk for children.

Neither do all step-mothers, returned Johnny, for Mrs. Kindly is a step-mother, and I have seen her give the children new milk just from the cow. But I am sure she told me to sweeten it with white sugar.

Oh, yes, said Emma, and started for the sugar-bowl. But where is it? cried she, it is not here.

Oh, I remember, answered Johnny, mother locked it up in the parlor closet yesterday, because I was picking out the lumps. She went away in such a hurry she forgot it. Well, I suppose molasses will do just as well. So he turned up the jug.

There, cried Emma, there is too much.

No, said Johnny, it cannot be too sweet for baby.

With a big spoon they poured the noxious mixture into the stomach of the helpless innocent, who opened its little mouth to receive it like a hungry bird. Mrs. Tattle, meanwhile, was scudding in the

direction of the city, little thinking her dear baby was being stuffed with sour milk and molasses. She was turning a corner as she met Mrs. Scandal.

How do you do, Mrs. Scandal? said she. I am glad to meet you. Did you hear about old Mr. Smith, how he shook the green-hide over his young wife?

Yes, replied Mrs. Scandal, but I do not pity him. Why did he marry that young flirt?

Sure enough, said Mrs. Tattle, why did he not select a suitable companion? There is the widow Gray who is about his age.

Yes, replied Mrs. Scandal, he wanted her, but he couldn't come it; she told me all about it. You know she has property and wants the management of it herself. But where are you going this afternoon, Mrs. Tattle?

I am going to Mrs. Gossips, replied Mrs. Tattle.

The very place I am going to, said Mrs. Scandal, but I am afraid Mrs. Gossip will not be at home; I have called at her house often, but seldom find her at home.

She is a very sociable woman, said Mrs. Tattle,

and likes to visit; she is none of your selfish creatures. Now there is Mrs. Lovehome is the same as a nun. She seems to think there is no world beyond their own farm. And such pains as she takes to adorn her rustic cottage with flowers and shrubbery, as though she thought it the loveliest spot in all creation. There is no pleasure in visiting her, for there is no information to be gleaned from her. She never knows who is going to be married nor who goes a courting, nothing about the flirtations of the young folks, nor intrigues of married people. Now I like to see a woman take some interest in the community in which she lives.

So do I, said Mrs. Scandal, but how is it with Mrs. Lovehome, does she sit silent when you visit her?

Oh, no, answered Mrs. Tattle, she talks enough, but half the time one cannot understand her lingo, and I do not believe she understands it herself. It sounds like something she has read in the Bible, or some other musty old book.

They had now arrived at the house of Mrs. Gossip and rapped at the door. Mrs. Gossip came and

shook hands very heartily with Mrs. Tattle and Mrs. Scandal.

We were afraid, said they, we should not find you at home.

I had my bonnet and shawl on to go out, replied Mrs. Gossip, when Miss Gad and Miss Blab came in.

Are they here, cried Mrs. Scandal? I am glad of it, they will be a great addition to our enjoyment.

Walk in ladies, said Mrs. Gossip.

So here they were, an interesting party, but for the credit of the sex we will drop the curtain and put our fingers in our ears.

Miss Gad and Miss Blab were two maiden ladies who had arrived at the interesting age of forty. They were very intimate, and always went together. They had come up from the city to visit Mrs. Gossip, but about four o'clock they arose to depart.

What, going so soon, exclaimed Mrs. Gossip. I thought you came to pass the afternoon and take tea.

We did intend to do so, said Miss Blab, but Miss Gad thinks we had better go, as there is quite a

number of ladies we wish to call on before we reach home. So the maiden ladies took their leave, and turned their faces homeward.

I know how it is, said Miss Blab, when a disgraceful story comes out, it goes like the wind, and if we should defer our calls until to-morrow, half the city would have heard of it. I like to be the first to tell exciting news.

So do I, returned Miss Gad. There is but little satisfaction in repeating a story after the first wonderment is over. We did well to start at once, tea or no tea.

Now, said Miss Blab, here are two roads, both of which lead to the center of the city. I propose we separate. You take one road, and I the other. We can circulate the news much more rapidly in that way. Besides, if we go together, while you are telling the tale, I shall be so excited, that I shall be breaking in upon your discourse, which you know is a sign of low breeding.

Your suggestion is a good one, replied Miss Gad. I will take this road, and if I arrive at the center of the city first, I will wait for you in Miss Hearall's millinery shop.

Thus the ancient maidens separated. At about nine o'clock, as they were entering Central street, they recognized each other at the same moment, it being moonlight.

We keep time well, exclaimed Miss Blab, here we are just as we wanted to be. How many calls have you made?

I have made thirty, replied Miss Gad. Have you made as many as that?

I only called at twenty houses. I believe that is the most inquisitive street, for I found it almost impossible to get away from some of them, they wanted to hear all the particulars.

I anticipated that, said Miss Gad. That was why I thought favorably of separating, for I knew your propensity to enter into detail. I was determined not to gratify the curiosity of the ladies too much, because if I did so, I could not call on half as many. I made a firm resolve as to how much I would say, and no more. On entering a house, I refused a seat, telling them I was in haste, and merely called to inquire after the health of the family. Then I would turn and get hold of the door-latch, as if I

were going; when suddenly recollecting, I would say, Oh, did you hear about the difficulty up to old Mr. Smith's? Of course, they answered no; what is the trouble there? The same trouble, said I, which usually follows such foolish matches. I have it from good authority that the old gentleman detected his young wife wandering through the woods with a dandy clerk. Is it possible, cried they. What did he do about it? Just what he should have done, said I; he took Eunice's green-hide, that she keeps to drive the cows with, and gave her a flogging. Mind you I told the story with my hand on the latch, and when I came to the end I opened the door and fled. Some pursued me; but by the time they were at the door, I was in the street hastening to the next house.

Well, said Miss Blab, I never had your decision of character; but between us both, we have done pretty well. We have reported the affair to more than fifty ladies. Come in and tarry all night with me, we will go out again to-morrow morning.

And so the maidens entered the house of Miss Blab. That evening the fifty ladies repeated the

story to their husbands which they had heard about the Smiths. The fifty husbands repeated the same the next morning in their fifty respective places of business, and before the week closed, it had been the topic of conversation in every house, store, and shop in the city. Some of the older children overheard the story, and it was carried into the schools, and was even whispered the following Sabbath on the steps of the meeting-house.

Mr. Sensuality declared he did not doubt the story in the least, it was what every reasonable person would expect. Mrs. Ideality said the young people probably possessed similar tastes, and happening to meet in their morning walks, a mutual friendship would naturally grow up between them. She presumed there was nothing criminal thought of.

Mrs. Experience said she could see through the whole of it. Eunice is at the bottom of it all. I know the whole blood of them, she exclaimed, indignantly. This is another Flora Vernal affair.

Why, what of Flora Vernal, was asked.

Flora and I were girls together, replied Mrs. Experience. Eunice was also young then, and her

mother was anxious to see her married. Eunice never was attractive, although her fond mother fancied she possessed some charms. Still it was evident that she cherished a feeling of jealousy and bitterness toward every pretty girl in the village. It was an obscure country town, and was seldom visited by persons distinguished for learning. Mr. Erudite, however, came to pass the spring vacation with his country cousins. The appearance of the genteel stranger produced a general sensation. Mothers were never more anxious, nor were daughters ever more desirous of pleasing than now. Competition was running high, when it was proposed that on May morning there should be a grand excursion to the woods. Flora Vernal was an artless, unaffected girl, and from early childhood had been passionately fond of flowers. She had hardly abandoned the cradle, when her mother missed her one day from the nursery, and, being alarmed for her safety, was running in all directions, and at last she found her strayed away into the fields, with her little chubby hands filled with posies.

Our May-day party had rambled through the

woods to satiety, and were starting to return home, when Flora found a singular flower. She asked one of the girls what it was? She was stooping over it with an inquiring look when Mr. Erudite chanced to pass that way. He paused by her side and examined the flower, telling her its name, and describing the nature and qualities of the plant. Flora was all attention, for she possessed an inquiring mind. When he ceased, she looked around for her companions, and was surprised to find them not in sight. Mr. Erudite offered his arm, and they walked rapidly to overtake the party.

They are not only out of sight, but out of hearing too, said Flora. I think we must have stopped longer than we were aware of.

They had not proceeded far, before other plants attracted their attention. Mr. Erudite loved to examine them, and collected some specimens; and Flora loved to hear him explain and talk of them. While they lingered thus, time was flying, and the party had arrived at their respective homes. The mother of Eunice had prepared a sumptuous dinner, and was awaiting the return of her daughter.

Where is Mr. Erudite? she asked, as Eunice entered. I thought you intended to invite him to dinner.

I did intend to, but Flora Vernal enticed him to linger behind in the woods with her. I always did hate her, and I hate her now more than ever.

You were foolish to come away, said her mother. I would have stuck by on purpose to vex her.

I would have done so, said Eunice, if I could have foreseen the event. The girls were all piqued to see him so interested in Flora, so we all hurried along, thinking he would follow. I told the girls that Flora ought to be exposed and disgraced.

Indeed, she ought to be disgraced and she shall be, cried her mother, the artful hussy. Jonathan, run as fast as you can to the woods and see what discoveries you can make.

Jonathan partook of his mother's spirit; he forgot his dinner, and seizing his old felt hat he started for the woods at full speed. He had not reached the woods when, as he darted around a corner, he met the objects of pursuit. This brought him to a

sudden halt. He gawked at them a moment, then squealed out, Wall, whar yer been tew?

Mr. Erudite answered, we have been on a botanical excursion.

Jonathan turned with a disappointed air. As he jogged along home he muttered to himself, that is a tarnation lie, thar aint only one boat in the pond, and the boys has gone a fishin' in that ar.

His mother was aware that there existed a feeling of envy against Flora in the minds of a majority of the mothers and daughters in the village, and she resolved to ruin her character if possible. She awaited Jonathan's report, and when he told her they said they had been off in a boat, which was a lie, for the boys had the boat, she delayed no longer, but went from house to house declaiming against the outrageous conduct of Flora Vernal. The lie about the boat, that proves conscious guilt. Such conduct should not be passed over lightly. It encourages immoral practices among our young people, to let such actions pass unnoticed. And she a church member too. Our minister should be informed of it. The whole affair should be brought before the

church. Yes, Flora should be disgraced and pointed at as a warning to our village maidens. Accordingly a committee was appointed to confer with the minister. A church meeting was called, and Flora was summonsed to answer to the charges against her. The minister summed up the evidence. He dwelt with emphasis on the falsehood. A lie indicates conscious guilt.

Flora inquired what the lie was of which she had been accused.

The minister asked her if she did not tell Jonathan that they had been on the pond in a boat.

No; she denied the assertion.

What answer did you make when Jonathan asked where you had been?

I made no reply, said Flora, but Mr. Erudite said that we had been on a botanical excursion.

The minister bit his lips. I perceive, said he, that there is a mistake here which changes the aspect of the affair. He then explained to his illiterate church that botany is the science of plants; that Mr. Erudite did not mean to convey the idea of a boat excursion. Flora smiled through her tears at

the ludicrous mistake. The old ladies argued that it was improper for Flora to tarry behind in the woods, while the rest of the party returned home.

Yes, said the minister, but I know how it is with young students, if their favorite study is botany or mineralogy, they never weary of collecting specimens. He thought Flora was rather imprudent, in allowing the party to go on, while she remained. If she was willing to say she was sorry, and that in future she would keep up with the main body of her party, the affair should be dropped. Flora said she was sorry, and she had suffered so much in consequence of that thoughtless act she was sure she should never repeat it. The minister then delivered a short lecture on the sacredness of female reputation; of the folly, nay, the wickedness of exaggerating mole-hills into mountains; he exhorted them to cherish that charity which thinketh no evil. He then closed the meeting.

On the following morning he happened to meet Mr. Erudite; he shook his hand heartily, while a smile wreathed his lips; he said, remember, my dear sir, that when you left the seat of learning, you left

the votaries of science behind. While you continue with us, you may think with the wise, but you must converse with the vulgar.

And, continued Mrs. Experience, this story about Mrs. Smith has been got up on as slight a foundation. I will go to see her and satisfy myself.

CHAPTER X.

FRESH DEVELOPMENTS—NEW INTRIGUES.

On the following week she drove out to Mr. Smith's. She was surprised and pained when she saw Mary, who seemed the picture of hopeless misery. Her once full, plump form was emaciated to a skeleton; her once expressive eyes looked like leaden balls, and her once courteous manners were changed to a confused, half insane appearance. Mrs. Experience wished to have a private conversation with Mary, but Eunice was determined not to leave them. Mrs. Experience thought to draw Mary aside by saying that she would like to see the garden. Accordingly they walked out into the garden, but five minutes had not elapsed before Eunice appeared with a bowl in her hand to pick currants for tea.

I think, said Mrs. Experience, that a ride would refresh you. Step into my carriage, Mrs. Smith;

we can drive two or three miles into the country and return before tea.

When seated in the carriage, they were silent for some time. At length Mrs. Experience said, Mary, while looking on you to-day, how deeply I wished your good mother was still living.

Why so? asked Mary.

Because, said Mrs. Experience, we are all subject to grief and disappointment on the journey of life, and it is natural for young persons, when suffering affliction, to long for a sympathizing friend into whose bosom to pour the story of their wrongs.

Mary had wept until the fountain of tears was dry. For more than a week a feverish heat had inflamed her brain, but now, at the voice of sympathy, her tears flowed afresh.

This is indeed a world of trouble, replied Mary, but if Mr. Smith was well, I would not think anything a trouble.

Is Mr. Smith not well? asked Mrs. Experience.

His bodily health is good, said Mary, but his brain is diseased. He does not appear like himself at any time, and by spells has dreadful raving fits. His

mind is constantly haunted by the idea that I am false to the nuptial vow, which renders us both extremely miserable. When we can find no comfort at home, she continued, it is vain to look for it this side of the grave. I said in my heart, I will go to the house of the Lord. In thy courts will I seek consolation, oh my God! So I went to meeting, where the congregation gazed at me as though I had been a foreign animal escaped from a caravan. This led me to suppose that Mr. Smith had said something away from home, which caused the people to look at me with suspicion. This supposition was confirmed when I went to the city to do a little shopping. All the women shunned me, while the men passed me with a smirk on their faces. As I was returning home some three or four young fellows came out of the woods with guns on their shoulders, and when I had passed them, they whistled after me, and then burst into a coarse, vulgar laugh. I must be very stupid not to see from all this that my reputation has suffered abroad. The community have no idea that Mr. Smith is insane.

Neither have I any idea that he is insane, an-

swered Mrs. Experience. Believe me, Mary, you labor under a great deception. Eunice is the hidden serpent that destroys your peace.

Impossible, cried Mary, I have sometimes thought her my only friend; for when Mr. Smith has his raving spells, she seems to pity me, and shows all the kindness in her power.

She only *seems* to pity you, said Mrs. Experience. In secret she rejoices in your sufferings. She practices every artifice, that she may effectually deceive you. I saw she was determined we should not be alone together, because she feared I should enlighten you in regard to this affair. Did you not notice that she was continually in our presence?

That is a habit with her, replied Mary, whoever comes to the house, she does the same thing. It is impolite, we know, but Eunice never was instructed in the rules of etiquette. Besides she is uninformed, and such persons wish to hear all they can; for conversation is the only source from whence they draw their reflections.

Unlearned as she is, returned Mrs. Experience, she is capable of deep intrigue. I advise you to get her out of your house as soon as possible.

That is impossible, said Mary, Mr. Smith thinks her perfect.

Well, said Mrs. Experience, get rid of her as soon as you can, for peace will never be restored to you while she remains. But, Mary, permit me to advise you, whatever they may do, never say a word to any one; keep all locked in your own breast. Nay, if they cut your throat, you must not cry murder, for it would be a family affair, and of course a mutual disgrace.

Byron displayed a knowledge of the female heart, replied Mary, when writing of one whose domestic affections had suffered wreck,

"What, then, to her was womanhood or fame?"

Yes, said Mrs. Experience, I know Lord Byron expressed the idea in a few words; but I have thought much of you lately, Mary. I know the generosity of your disposition; you detest a mean or unjust action. Suffering as you have from the malice of your enemies, and especially from those in your own household, I feared you would be driven to desperation, and form a habit of speaking un-

guardedly before any one who might happen to be present. Your disposition is frank and impulsive; besides, your mind is weakened and your judgment impaired by the suffering you have endured. I knew you would be more liable to fall into this error in consequence of having no intimate friend to whom you could vent this fire shut up in the bones, as it were. I conjure you to avoid this, for should it become known that you sometimes speak from impulse, your words will be watched and repeated with eagerness and misrepresentation, which will give your foes occasion to triumph.

I am not aware that I have foes, replied Mary. Why could I have? I never wished to injure any one.

I know that, returned Mrs. Experience; you have always wished to do good, but have you never observed it is the sweetest apples the birds are continually pecking at? The wicked consider your blameless life as a silent reproach on their mal-practices. Besides, the virtuous and deserving have spoken your praises, which fills the selfish with envy, and they long to see you disgraced. Had you been an

insignificant being, whom no one envied, do you suppose Eunice's lies would have raised such a hue and cry through the length and breadth of our city? You have judged the world by your own character, which is natural for us all while we are young, and have learned but little of human nature. But time reveals the deplorable truth, that there exists every shade of character, from the virtue and goodness which excites our admiration, to that deep depravity which we view with detestation.

They had, at this period, returned to Mrs. Smith's residence. Eunice waited at the table with sour looks. She had seen that Mrs. Experience was determined to have a private interview with Mary, and she rightly guessed what the subject was on which she wished to converse. Having taken tea, Mrs. Experience departed. Mary, whose face was ever an index of her heart, was distant in her manner toward Eunice. She was not revengeful nor resentful, but maintained a sort of non-intercourse as far as circumstances would admit. Eunice was not slow to notice the change in Mary's manner, and rightly inferring that she was in the secret, she de-

termined to make short work of it. I will not dally along in this way, she said, I will dispatch her in a short time. The day following Mrs. Experience's visit, Eunice whispered to her uncle, as he went to the kitchen to light his pipe, "I shall go for the cows early to-night," said she, "and I wish you would be in the field at the same time, as I have something new to tell you."

Mr. Smith was becoming imbecile. He had so long been annoyed, vexed, angered, nay tortured, by the green-eyed monster jealousy, that he had become childish. He believed Eunice to be his most sincere friend, and listened to her words as if all she uttered was gospel. He was impatient to learn what she had to communicate, and had been waiting in the field an hour when Eunice made her appearance.

Uncle, said she, it is my painful duty to inform you, that there is a conspiracy against your life. You know Mary went to the city last week on Friday to do some shopping. When she returned, she laid the packages on the table, and started for her room, when, turning suddenly, she took a small pack-

age from among the rest, and slipped it into her pocket. I have seen so many of her sly tricks that my suspicion was aroused, and I followed on tip-toe, and, peeping through the key-hole, I saw where she put it. As soon as she left the room, I entered and secured the package, and on opening it, behold it was arsenic! The truth struck me in a moment, and I threw it into the fire. That is what makes her so grim. Do you not notice how odd she is toward me. And Mrs. Experience told me, privately, that a dandy clerk in the city got on a spree and exposed his intimacy with Mary. When rum is in wit is out, and he brawled it out to his companions. He declares he loves her, and says he will have her yet, if he has to put a ball through old Smith's heart. Look at her and see what ravages love has made. She has pined away, until not one of her dresses will remain hooked, and she has hardly strength enough to lift the tea-pot.

While Eunice was speaking the old gentleman listened with suppressed breathing. She ceased, and he cried out like one in agony, What is the name of the detested villain? Tell me, I will pursue him to

the ends of the earth, and plunge a dagger into his vitals. Yes, shouted he, as he sprung to his feet with the gestures of one in a frenzied state, I will give neither sleep to my eyes, nor slumber to my eye-lids, until I have washed my hands in his heart's blood.

That is more than I know, replied Eunice; Mrs. Experience did not know. She said the fellows refused to reveal the name of their boon companion.

I will know his name, he wildly cried; she shall reveal it, or I will wreak my vengeance on her.

Mr. Smith uttered this as with rapid strides he advanced towards the house. Mary had become so reduced in strength that she could not endure these outbreaks. They threw her into the most distressing hysterics. Thus she existed for more than a year, hopeless and friendless, while Eunice still continued inventing new schemes of mischief. What a contrast in the spirit which pervaded this dwelling, to that which shone through it when Mary first resided within its walls. Then the former Mrs. Smith was the presiding angel. Here was the spirit of love, which shed a warming and illuminating glow

through the venerable mansion. This spot Mary had hailed as a haven of rest from the tossing of life's troubled billows. At the death of this amiable woman, the fiend Hate usurped the government. Now Malice, Jealousy, and Despair were sheltered beneath its roof. Although Mary still existed, she was but the wreck of her former self. Her temper was embittered and her mind shattered. Reason tottered on its throne, and had nearly lost its balance.

CHAPTER XI.

POVERTY—JOY—PEACE—SORROW.

JUST at this critical time, Heaven interposed, and sent a timely rescue. For to the joy of the parents, and surprise of the community, the intelligence went forth that Mrs. Smith had given birth to a son. Mr. Smith semed to have renewed his age. He threw aside his cane and walked very erect. Mary looked on her babe, and thanked God for the treasure. It aroused her dormant affections. Love, that delightful passion, which had slumbered so long in her breast, now flowed forth in a swelling flood, and she rejoiced as in the days of her youth. This event produced a feeling of independence in the mind of Mary. Have I not an object to love, thought she, an object to live for? What do I care for the Smiths, or Eunice, or any one else. Her disposition seemed entirely changed. From the grieved, forbearing spirit, she assumed an air of command. Resentment

burned within her for the injuries she had suffered.

I will take no more of their impudence, she said, but when I stamp my foot, they shall know that this house has a mistress.

Thus we learn that when forbearance is worn out, resentment and decision become the ruling passions.

It had happened that at different times Mr. Smith had lent his name to the paper of business men. At this time, extensive failures caused him to tremble for his own safety. Nor were his fears groundless. A crisis arrived when his possessions passed into the hands of strangers. This event so far overcame Mr. Smith as to prostrate all his faculties. He seemed stupefied, and depended on Mary to plan and arrange everything. Mary hardly knew whether to laugh or cry. She fully realized her situation. The wife of an old man without property or faculty, but then she knew that Eunice would be obliged to seek a home elsewhere. Welcome poverty, if it only brings me peace! she exclaimed. I feel as if I were a host myself. I can work day and night for the good of this dear babe.

Eunice departed in tears. Her wickedness had

operated against herself, for had she been kind, she would always have been welcome to share Mary's home, whether it was lofty or lowly.

As the wagon rolled away which contained the weeping Eunice and her effects, Mary turned to Mr. Smith and said, did you ever read Pilgrim's Progress?

Yes, replied Mr. Smith.

I feel, she said, just as Pilgrim did when the burden rolled from his back.

With the remnants of their ample fortune they removed to a rustic cottage in the country, nor did Mary cast one longing, lingering look behind. That gloomy old mansion had been the scene of so much misery, that her affections were weaned from it. She entered their humble abode with a hopeful heart, and by industry and skill she soon rendered it a pleasant and comfortable summer residence. She named it the Cottage of Contentment, and the greatest pleasure she enjoyed was in lingering by the cradle of her babe.

"Lo! at the couch where infant beauty slept,
Her silent watch the tender mother kept;

She, while the lovely babe unconscious lies,
Smiles on her slumbering child with pensive eyes,
And weaves a song of melancholy joy.
Sleep, lovely infant, sleep my darling boy;
Thy fame, thy worth, thy filial love at last
Shall soothe this aching heart for all the past."

Thus time flew. For the short space of a year Mary was permitted to rejoice in the enjoyment of maternal love. But her evil genius had not forsaken her, but seemed determined still to strew with thorns her rugged path. The cold winds of winter were forcing their way through their shattered tenement. Mr. Smith was incapable of supplying those comforts which her tender infant required. With a trembling heart she saw it sicken and droop. In vain she exhausted her skill in the healing art; she could do nothing. Mr. Smith, said she, the baby is no better. You will be obliged to go to the city for a physician.

I will go, Mary, said he, but this January thaw has rendered the roads almost impassable. I fear I shall not succeed in getting one. A feeling of agony shot through her heart. It occurred to her that it was not the thaw, but their reduced circumstances

which rendered it uncertain whether they could obtain help for their child. Mary brought Mr. Smith's overcoat. It had become shabby, it was hardly fit to wear to the city, but she did not think of that now. Her whole mind was engrossed by anxiety for her child. Mr. Smith took his cane, and with an anxious countenance started on foot for the city. Mary watched him from the narrow window until his form was lost to her view by a clump of trees, then dropping on her knees, she offered up a fervent prayer to God that he would warm the heart of some physician with a glow of humanity, that he might come to the relief of their darling child.

Poor Mary, she did not realize that it is the natural consequence of the physician's practice to harden his heart. She did not realize that it is a law of our nature that by daily witnessing pain and sickness, our feelings become blunted, and we gradually become incapable of pity. Poor Mr. Smith, with an agonized, doubting heart, he wearily plodded along, often sinking above his knees in the slop, though at length he reached the city, and with an exhausted frame and palpitating heart he rung at the

door of a physician. The doctor soon made his appearance. He said he was sorry it so happened, but he had two patients who were in a very critical state, and he had promised their friends that he would on no account leave the city. Mr. Smith then went to another physician's office. He said he would go if he were well. He was afflicted with a disease of the throat and lungs, which forbade him exposing himself to a damp atmosphere. What is the matter with the child, he inquired?

Mr. Smith replied, that it seemed to have a lung fever. The doctor took his pen, and said, I will give you a prescription. There, take that to the apothecary, and you will obtain such medicine as the child requires.

Mr. Smith took the prescription, and put it in his pocket, but he had no money, and therefore could hope for no better success with the apothecary. As he left the office, he saw another doctor up the street helping his wife into a sleigh. Discouraged and fatigued, he sat down on the steps; trembling in every limb, he felt he could not reach the doctor in time; so he asked a boy to go and tell the doctor

that Mr. Smith's child was very sick, and he was very anxious for a doctor. The boy did as he was requested.

What Smith? asked the doctor.

Old Mr. Smith, he answered, who lives a few miles back in the country.

No, he said, I am not going out there to-day in this slop.

He cracked his whip and was off, as his wife said, it is hard to refuse to go to a sick child.

Can't help it, said the doctor, I would not go out there for five dollars. My horse would be buried half of the time. Besides I should never get a cent for it. They are as poor as church mice.

Poor Mr. Smith dragged his wet, weary feet to the apothecary shop. The apothecary was a stern, austere looking man, and Mr. Smith hesitated. He thought of his suffering child, and nerved himself for the task of asking for medicine on credit. The man replied, "he would like to trade with him for money, but trust was out of the question. He did not trust any one."

Mr. Smith moved toward the door. Hope was

dying in his heart, when he happened to meet Mrs. Benevolence. She greeted him cordially, inquiring at the same time after Mary's health.

Mary is well, said he, but the baby is very sick. With a subdued tone, and beseeching look, he asked, Would you be so kind as to lend me a little change, to buy some medicine for it?

Certainly I will, with pleasure, said Mrs. Benevolence, here is a dollar. But you look weary and worn, come home with me and get some refreshment.

Thank you, my good Mrs. Benevolence, said he, while the tear of gratitude moistened his eye; I am impatient to get home with the medicine.

Give my love to Mary, said she, and tell her I will visit her as soon as the traveling will permit.

Mr. Smith procured the medicine, and hastened home. Mary had passed the hours of his absence in the most intense anxiety and suspense; and when she saw him returning alone, she burst into tears. As Mr. Smith entered and saw his wife weeping, he said, don't cry, Mary, I could not get a doctor, but I have some medicine.

How could you buy it? she asked; you had no money.

No, he replied, but I met Mrs. Benevolence, and she lent me a dollar.

God bless her forever, cried Mary, she is a dear, good woman. But there is still a difficulty, we do not know how to administer it.

Here are written directions, said Mr. Smith, that a doctor gave me.

Yes, returned Mary, but a physician cannot prescribe with judgment unless he knows the age and constitution of the child, and the precise stage of the disease. But we must give the medicine as directed; it is all we can do.

They watched the effect of the medicine with alternate hope and fear, such as parents alone can realize; but to their unspeakable grief they were convinced that their darling was growing worse. As Mr. Smith was sitting by the window, a Thomsonian doctor rode by. He ran out and entreated him to call. The doctor complied with the request, and as he looked on the child and felt its pulse, he shook his head. I am too late, said he, why did you not send for a physician?

We did, said Mr. Smith, but this thaw prevented them from coming.

He left a little simple medicine and departed. Mr. Smith followed him to the sleigh to inquire if there was a ray of hope. Mary asked no questions. She was scrutinizing the doctor's countenance when he examined her child, and hope died in her heart. In anguish she wept over the cradle of her babe. If he must die, she cried, I shall not long survive him. My life is wrapped in his, and for his sake alone have I endured existence.

She ceased not, day or night, to watch by the cradle of her boy, until the little spirit took its heavenward flight. She watched the whole of that fearful struggle which precedes the dissolution of the soul and body, and when it was over, she thanked God that her babe was at rest. The little sufferer expired in her arms, and as she laid the corpse tenderly in the cradle, she exclaimed, Its pain has ceased, I can ask no more.

Mr. Smith's grief burst through all restraint. The house resounded with his lamentations. He cast reflections on the inhumanity of the physicians.

Mary endeavored to comfort him. No earthly power can save mortals from death, said she, but to those who have faith in the immortality of the soul, death is robbed of half its sting. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," is the sentence passed on all flesh. But our Saviour hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. Only think, my dear husband, if we had died in infancy, what a sea of trouble we should have escaped.

Mary had seldom addressed Mr. Smith by the endearing name of husband, but mutual grief caused her to forget all injuries, and, for the time, moved her to tenderness. Mary felt she could not shroud the dear remains for the grave. Mr. Smith sent for a distant neighbor to perform the sad office, thus leaving her alone with the dead. Then it was that her fortitude forsook her. Wringing her hands as she traversed the floor, she cried aloud, Oh, my child, my child! Oh that thy life should be lost, for the want of a few paltry dollars! Oh never, never, until now, did I know the value of money! Oh, that cruel, cruel law, that robbed me and left me help-

less! Mrs. Benevolence heard of Mary's loss and said, I cannot go to her, but I will write her a letter of consolation. She wrote Mary a letter, enclosing the following lines:

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

A little spirit has passed away;
It hath left its earthly house of clay;
It hath left the scene of a mother's love,
And fled to yon bright world above.

Fond mother, do you ask how this can be;
Does it seem to you a mystery,
That the uncaged soul can soar in air,
To realms of love, so bright, so fair?

Then go and view the butterfly
Leave its chrysalis, and soar on high;
Fit emblem of the immortal mind
Which leaves the clog of earth behind.

I hear your low and plaintive wail;
I know you long to rend the veil
Which settles o'er the grave's cold night,
And hides the spirit-land from sight.

I know you long to see the band
Who sing God's praise in that bright land,
And view your own sweet darling there,
With pinions such as angels wear.

Remember that can never be;
'Tis not for mortal eyes to see
The glory bright, reserved for those
Who have fought life's battle to its close.

Let faith supply the place of sight,
For God is wisdom, love, and might,
And Christ to us his word hath given,
That of such as thine, is the kingdom of heaven.

Mary now lived without a purpose. When she heard the cold clod sounding on the coffin of her child, her inward spirit cried: Oh, that is the knell of my last earthly hope! Oh that the curtain would fall and end the scene, for I long to lie down in the grave and be at rest!

Months rolled on, and a general languor seemed to be pervading her whole system. She walked with a feeble step, and spoke in subdued accents. Her face wore the hue of death, and an irritating cough disturbed her nightly rest. . . . Bright spring was again bathing the earth in beauty, when Mrs. Benevolence again visited Mary. She found her destitute of those necessaries which her situation required, and, on her return home, she made up innumerable little packages from her own supplies to be sent to Mary. She also used her influence with the humane in her behalf. She went to Mrs. Experience and informed her of Mary's situation. She talks of you, said Mrs. Benevolence, as though you

were her mother. She longs to see you. You have grown up daughters here to keep your house in order, why can you not go and nurse her a month? It is our duty to smooth her passage to the grave. Mrs. Experience said she would do so, and, taking the supplies which Mrs. Benevolence had collected, she started for Mary's humble abode.

A faint gleam of gladness shone in Mary's eye, as Mrs. Experience entered and told her she had come to stop a month. Oh, how kind you are, she exclaimed, thus to enter the house of poverty and want.

It was Mrs. Benevolence who influenced me to come, said Mrs. Experience. She said my presence would comfort you.

It will indeed comfort me, replied Mary. You are the only person who ever seemed to read my heart and enter into my feelings. Mrs. Benevolence is an angel of charity, but with all her goodness, she lacks the power which you possess of discerning the secret soul.

The reason is, I am older, returned Mrs. Experience. I have lived a long life. It has been varied

by joy and sorrow, light and shade. My own experience has prepared me to sympathize with suffering. You say I discern the soul; if I do, it is by looking on the countenance, which, with the general appearance, is an index of the internal spirit.

O Mrs. Experience, have you, too, had trouble, asked Mary.

Most surely I have, she replied, and who has not?

The Bible informs us, said Mary, that God is just, and renders unto every man according to his works, but I confess my faith is often staggered when I see good people suffering undeserved affliction.

God is just, nevertheless, said Mrs. Experience, for he has so ordered that the natural consequence of sinful acts flows back on the sinner in streams of misery. But we are all in the flesh, and therefore subject to innumerable calamities which we cannot foresee or avoid. For instance, at a steamboat explosion, the virtuous and vicious perish together. A malignant fever spreads contagion through a city, and the good and evil become its victims. Our rulers enact unjust laws, and the righteous and wicked are alike sufferers.

Where, then, asked Mary, are the boasted rewards of virtue?

Let your own experience answer, she replied. You confess that the last seven years of your life have been mingled with extreme suffering.

Yes, said Mary, tongue cannot tell, nor pen describe, the pangs that at times have rent my heart and bewildered my brain.

But the tale is told, returned Mrs. Experience, in more eloquent language than is bequeathed to the tongue. That emaciated form; those brilliant eyes, burning with the lustre of disease; the hectic glow, all bespeak the internal conflict. But tell me, Mary, have you had no consolation? Is there no idea which has sustained your soul, and, at times, soothed your lacerated heart?

Yes, said Mary, thank God, I have not been left without consolation. I have had the testimony of conscience, that I have never deviated from the path of rectitude, and hence I am not the cause of my own misfortunes.

Suppose, said Mrs. Experience, that, to all you have suffered, had been added the stings of a guilty

conscience and the horrors of remorse, with the consciousness that by your own wicked conduct you had entailed on yourself the weighty burden of misery.

I could not have endured existence, she answered, the burden would have been heavier than I could have borne.

Behold, then, the reward of virtue! said Mrs. Experience, that inward peace, which the malice of foes cannot destroy. But you are talking too much, Mary. I will make your bed up nice before you lie down. Who has made your bed since you have been sick?

Mr. Smith has tried to make it sometimes, replied Mary, and I have tottered around it and shook it up a little.

Has no one offered to assist you, asked Mrs. Experience.

No one but Mrs. Benevolence, said Mary.

It is ever so, the world over, said Mrs. Experience. When fortune smiles and our cup is filled with pleasure, the multitude smile also, and we are surrounded by summer friends; but when chilling

adversity fixes on us his iron grasp and our cup overflows with bitterness, we are left to quaff the draught alone. Now your bed is ready, let me assist you to lie down. Now you look quite comfortable. Lie still and do not talk any more at present, and I will take one of the chickens which Mrs. Benevolence sent, and make some broth; it is nourishment you need, not medicine.

I will try to keep silent, answered Mary; but it is so pleasant to have a friend near, to whom I can speak my thoughts, after being so long exposed to the cold gaze of strangers.

While Mrs. Experience remained with Mary she gained in strength and cheerfulness, but her cough still continued inveterate. One day she was reclining on her bed, while Mrs. Experience was sitting by her side, when she said, Mary, since I have been with you the circumstances of your lot now, contrasted with the wedding party at your then happy home, has often forced itself upon my mind. Your image is before me, as you stood in all the charms of youth leaning on your noble Edwin, your face beaming with confiding love.

The contrast is too striking, replied Mary, I shrink from its contemplation.

You remember, said Mrs. Experience, the subject of conversation was woman's rights, when you asserted that you enjoyed all the rights you wished for. You felt you were filling the sphere for which God and nature designed you.

Yes, said Mary with a sigh, while a tear rolled down her pallid cheek, I said so because I felt so; but then I knew nothing of woman's wrongs. I had ever basked in the sunshine of prosperity, and been led by the hand of love.

But how much less, said Mrs. Experience, is your affliction than that of the unfortunate Fidelia. Happy indeed would it have been for her if God had called her husband to fill an early grave.

Who is Fidelia? asked Mary, and what is her history?

I will tell you on the morrow, for I do not think it is prudent that your mind or feelings should be excited any more to-day, as you are still weak.

CHAPTER XII.

FIDELIA AND DELILA.

THE next day, Mrs. Experience came and seated herself by Mary's bedside, and began to relate the story which she had promised her, of Fidelia's sufferings. Fidelia is a woman about your own age, she said. I have known her from her birth. Her mother was my friend, and a wise mother she was. In the education of Fidelia, she sought to prepare her for the duties and trials of life. She taught her to respect industry and frugality, that she might become useful and prudent. She taught her that the deepest and purest affections of our nature cluster around the family altar, and domestic hearth. She caused her to commit to memory Solomon's description of a virtuous woman. "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies; strength and honor are her clothing, and she shall rejoice in time to come." Fidelia was not beautiful, but hers

was an expressive countenance. She was tall and slender, and she was more active than strong.

Inconstancious saw and admired Fidelia. He sought and won her heart. He led the trusting girl to the altar, and there before God, and in the presence of numerous witnesses, he solemnly swore that nought save death should sunder them. . . . One year had run its rapid round, when the joy of parental love was added to conjugal bliss. Fidelia lived in her affections. In the tranquillity of home, the kind attentions of her husband, and the love of her babe, her whole being was absorbed. Thus the peaceful years sped gently by, until her little daughter had attained her seventh year. At this period Delila came to reside in that neighborhood. She was the young widow of a sea-captain who had been lost on a foreign voyage. I know, too, the mother of Delila. She was not a good woman. There was but one trait in her character which prevented her from being a woman of notorious infamy; and that was large approbativeness. This induced her to practice art and intrigue, to conceal her character from the world; but she did not fully succeed; her

general reputation was doubtful, and her near neighbors knew her as she was.

Delila inherited her mother's constitution. She was of a short, stout formation, with a restless, roving eye. Notwithstanding this, had Delila and Fidelia been exchanged in infancy, and each been subjected to the influence of the other's mother, Delila might probably have been trained to a path of virtue, while Fidelia might have been led in the broad road to ruin. As it was, both nature and education combined to render Delila wanton. During the years of opening womanhood, her mother had too successfully instructed her in those arts which, like the snare of the fowler, allure the unwary youth to destruction. "Why, my dear Delila," said her mother, "this is a world of commerce. To man nature has given strength, to woman beauty. If man depends on the gift of strength for support, why may not woman depend on the gift of beauty. Nature herself indicates her own design." Thus we see that character is formed by the influence which surround childhood and youth, before the mind is sufficiently mature to judge between good and evil.

Delila loved the flattery and excitement which attends that course of life which her mother had pointed out to her. It was her business to adorn her person and display her charms, and she soon became an adept in all the blandishments of the courtesan. The mother of Delila had a large brain and considerable foresight. She knew the time would arrive when her daughter would be stripped of her attractions and become a despised outcast. She had been on the look-out for some time for a desirable match for Delila, hoping by marriage to partially evade the natural consequences of her present course.

Delila was at length introduced to a young sea-captain, whom her sagacious mother at once perceived to be just the man. He was a young man of a warm and generous heart, unacquainted with the perfidy of the world, and judging others by his own amiable disposition. Being truthful and sincere, he was unsuspicious of treachery in others. Delila's mother instructed her in the plan to be pursued. "You must affect modesty, my dear," said she, "with an abhorrence of everything like free, or improper conduct."

At first they treated him with the utmost politeness and the most profound respect; but after a little acquaintance the old lady assumed the tender interest of a mother, while Delila acted the chaste and loving sister. The young man's sensitive heart readily responded to this apparent kindness. His affections were gradually enlisted, and he became the husband of Delila.

Had he lived, the painful truth would by degrees have been revealed to him, but God in mercy took him from the unhappy condition, by being wrecked in a storm at sea. He only left sufficient means for Delila to establish herself in a home of her own. She had seen a house advertised for sale, which was situated near the residence of Inconstancious. Delila purchased it and fixed her residence. She saw Inconstancious. He had a tall, manly figure, with a genteel deportment. She made inquiries, and found him to be engaged in a prosperous business. The conquest is desirable, thought she, I will practice my magic arts, and will soon lead him captive.

One morning she saw Inconstancious pass her door and enter his dwelling at the usual breakfast

hour. Now, thought she, is a favorable time to show myself. She painted her face, and perfumed her hair, and, taking a china pitcher, she proceeded to the house of Inconstancious to purchase some milk for her coffee. She entered with a soft step, and spoke in winning tones, obtained the milk and returned home. She knew the precise time he passed her door to his meals, and she formed the habit of seating herself in a large open window at that hour, where she was fully exposed to his view, and with arms and bosom bare, she would sit leisurely combing her raven hair over her snowy shoulders. As he appeared, she would greet him with a bewitching smile, observing him narrowly the while, to see if she was producing the desired effect. She saw the spell was upon him, which encouraged her to proceed. She wished to display herself in every interesting position. She attired herself in gaudy array, and, seating herself in the window with a gilt-edged book in her hand, pretended to be engrossed in its pages. As Inconstancious was passing, she suddenly looked up with her usual smile.

Oh! said she, I nearly lost the pleasure of observing you; I was so deeply interested in my book.

What book have you? he asked.

Come in and see, she answered.

He cast a glance at his own windows to see if Fidelia was observing him, and not seeing her he walked in. But Fidelia did see him. She was standing a little back from the window, and with grief witnessed the whole. She had disliked Delila's first appearance, and subsequently had become thoroughly disgusted with her daily conduct. Fidelia tenderly loved her husband; she had ever sacrificed her own wishes to his; and it was with the most painful sensations she had noticed the flush of pleased excitement which had o'erspread his features after these meetings with Delila. Besides, he had evinced a slight indifference toward herself and a carelessness of the caresses of their child, which was quite a new thing with him. Fidelia had never spoken on the subject. She dreaded that her husband should for a moment suppose that she doubted his faithfulness. But now she considered it her duty to remonstrate. She drew him aside, and, in grieved and tender tones, warned him of his danger.

You know how it is, my dear, said she; sin steals

upon us so gradually, so imperceptibly, that we are in the iron grasp of the monster before we are aware of it.

Inconstancious said it was nothing, he had no designs in regard to Delila.

No, my dear, returned she, so far from it that you are unconscious of the spell she is throwing around you. Be not offended, my husband, that I have spoken to you on the subject; were I to see you tottering on the verge of a precipice, would I not be impelled to reach forth my hand for your rescue?

Although Inconstancious had said it was nothing, yet he was not unmoved by his wife's tender appeal, and as he left the apartment he secretly resolved to avoid the fascinating Delila. Fidelia saw, with satisfaction, that in passing and repassing to his business he walked on the other side of the street, without even turning his face to Delila's window. With spite Delila noticed this, and said, that hateful wife is the cause of this; but I will not be baffled; I will yet let her know my power.

On a bright moonlight evening, Inconstancious was returning to his home, where the true and faithful

Fidelia was awaiting his return. He walked slowly along in deep thought, his eyes bent on the ground, when he was aroused from his reverie by the sound of sweet music floating on the air. He stopped and listened as though he was enchanted. "From whence proceed those melodious notes?" said he. He found the music issued from a bower, situated in a remote corner of Delila's garden. The melody operated as a soft opiate on the disturbed mind of Inconstancious, and he entered the garden half conscious of danger, but resolving not to enter the bower; but only to linger near it unobserved, that he might enjoy the inspiring melody. He thought to conceal himself in the shadow of the fence, but Delila was watching him through a slight opening in the foliage of the bower, and she immediately commenced to sing an accompaniment to her lute.

"Will you come to the bower I have shaded for you,
Your seat shall be roses bespangled with dew;
Will you, will you, will you, will you
Come to the bower."

Inconstancious's heart beat violently, and a general tremor pervaded his frame. He felt irresistibly

drawn to enter the bower. Delila knew he stood in the entrance, but she pretended to be unaware of his presence, that he might have ample time to contemplate her charms. She was seated on a bank of flowers in a reclining attitude, with the full moon-beams falling directly upon her. Its rays illuminated the jewels which encircled her fingers, twinkled from her ears, and sparkled on her snowy breast. Inconstantious presented himself. She eagerly arose in all the blaze of beauty, and expanded her soft arms to receive him. He could resist her no longer; he forgot his nuptial vow, his sacred obligations to Fidelia were forgotten, and, intoxicated with passion, he yielded to the power of the enchantress.

Oh, dear, exclaimed Mary, why did he listen to the song of the siren? Why did he stop to parley with temptation?

Ah, replied Mrs. Experience, that is the maelstrom which has engulfed millions. They venture to the edge, and, being unable to return, they are drawn into the vortex, and dashed against the rock of destruction. Had I the voice of ten thousand trumpets, and was allowed but one utterance, I

would shout to the nations of the earth, "Parley not with temptation."

If Inconstancious had been firm, said Mary, and kept on his way without looking to the right hand or the left, she would soon have given up the pursuit.

Yes, said Mrs. Experience, but Delila understood her trade; she saw the conflict between duty and inclination, which encouraged her to persevere. She knew, too, the combined effects of music, poetry, and moonlight on a heart struggling with forbidden love. Each succeeding night found Inconstantious at Delila's bower, while poor Fidelia was left to weep and wring her hands as she traversed her solitary chamber, where no sound broke the silence of midnight, save the wail of despair. In vain she expostulated with him, he was deaf to her entreaties, and unmoved by her tears. He seemed as hardened as a confirmed bacchanalian. Home, which had been the center of all his sweet and tender affections, had now lost its attractions. Its tranquil pleasures seemed insipid, and he longed for the exciting presence of Delila. Her image filled his waking fancy, and floated in his nightly visions. In his ex-

cess of infatuation he fondly believed she loved but him alone. Deluded man! he little thought he was the hundredth individual on whom she had practiced the same arts with similar success, and that when his cash failed, he, too, would be abandoned for a fresh victim.

At length Fidelia received a visit from her father. He was surprised and pained at the change in his daughter. He felt amazed when contemplating her haggard and sorrow-stricken countenance, and contrasted it with her former animated, cheerful face, beaming with love and hope. He solicited her to accompany him on his return home; but she rather declined. He urged the restoring effects of fresh air, country diet, and her mother's skill in nursing. With her husband's consent she took her little daughter, Viola, and returned to the home of her youth. Her mother met her at the door.

Why, Fidelia, she cried, can this be you?

She threw her arms around her mother's neck, and, bathing her bosom with tears, she sobbed aloud, Yes, mother, it is I. Like Noah's dove I return to the ark, for my soul finds no rest on the world's cold flood.

Viola was fatigued with the journey and soon fell asleep, when Fidelia conveyed her to her sleeping apartment. It had been her own room in former happy days. Every article of furniture was familiar, and looked as it did of yore. Oh, cried she, the change this sad heart brings! Home, with all its dear associations, cannot restore departed joys. She laid the slumbering Viola on the same little bed on which she had herself enjoyed the sound and peaceful sleep of childhood, and on which in her maiden years her heart had beat joyfully with blissful dreams. She gazed long and sadly on her lovely daughter; "Heavenly Father, I thank thee for this inestimable treasure," she ejaculated. "Although forsaken by my bosom friend, I cannot be utterly comfortless as long as this sweet angel walks by my side."

Fidelia soon revealed to her mother the source of her grief, and her mother communicated the same to her father. He was indignant. He wrote to Inconstancious, using bitter language, and alluded to a letter he had addressed to him some eight years before, when he sued for the father's consent to his union with the daughter. He copied a part of the letter,

which was expressed in the following words: "The many amiable qualities of your beloved Fidelia stole insensibly on my heart. Never before have I met with one who was adorned with every grace, who was the embodiment of every female virtue. I await your answer with the utmost impatience. Should it be favorable, it will fill my soul with joy, and I will make it my constant study to promote her happiness; if unfavorable, it will render me extremely miserable." The letter was short, but comprehensive. It was interlarded with reproachful appellations. Hypocrite, traitor, and villain, were the names by which he addressed him. He concluded with the assertion that Fidelia would no more return. The mother showed the letter to Fidelia.

Oh, said she, that will never do! I know his disposition; he is resentful, and sometimes revengeful. Tell father to burn it and write again, in a manner which will conciliate him.

Yes, replied her mother, I think so too. Inconstancious is left wholly to the influence of Delila, and it is characteristic of that class of females to harbor an inveterate hatred to the wife, when they

have designs on the husband, and she would be sure to grasp at the advantage his exasperation would give, to influence him to a lasting separation.

I have no objection, said Fidelia, to those extracts from his letter, where he so impatiently urged father's consent to our marriage. It may serve to recall vividly to his mind past seasons of endearment, and awaken him to the inconsistency of his conduct.

Inconsistent, indeed, sighed her mother. I would not have believed it possible for Inconstancious to prove false.

If you had watched the progress of the affair, continued Fidelia, while a tear trickled down her cheek, you would have more charity. Had you witnessed the skill with which she manœuvred, first to attract his attention and to please his fancy, then to kindle the imagination and excite the sexual propensity, you would blame him less.

Yes, said her mother, but Delila discerned in his character a weakness, an indecision, which encouraged her. Do you suppose she would attempt to play her tricks on such a man as your father? No, his reproving frown would awe her at once.

Father is an uncommon man, replied Fidelia, there are but few men of his firm principles and unbending integrity.

Your father has been called a passionate man, said her mother. I know his feelings and expression are strong against every form of injustice. Cruelty or oppression excites his indignation, which gives him the reputation of a high temper. If his temper is high, it is but the boiling up and overflowing of virtuous resentment. He is incapable of deception, and detests a mean action.

We should follow the example of our Saviour, answered Fidelia; he never was exasperated at the workers of iniquity. He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Yes, rejoined her mother, but in him the divine predominated over the human; in us, nature triumphs over grace.

It does indeed! exclaimed Fidelia, if we neglect watchfulness and prayer. But the more our spirits hold communion with the divine spirit, the more we shall be enabled to follow the example of the Son of God.

I am glad, replied her mother, to hear you talk so. Your religious sentiments seem to be awakened; you never used to have such deep, spiritual views.

No, said Fidelia; when we are basking in the sunshine of prosperity, we half forget God; but I have learned the folly of leaning for support on an arm of flesh. Where can the neglected wife find refuge, but at the throne of grace. Her wound is too deep for human sympathy to heal or soothe.

The mother of Fidelia took the letter to the old gentleman. It is the opinion of our daughter, said she, that this letter would do more hurt than good; therefore she requests you to burn it and write in a more conciliating tone.

I shall do no such thing, he answered, I will not retract a word. He deserves it all and more, the villain. It is a pity if we must conciliate him. I would sooner shake him. My blood boils when I think of him.

It is not for him, but for her sake, said she, that I would advise you to do as she desires. For she harbors no resentment toward him, but throws the mantle of charity over all his faults.

Fidelia is foolish, he cried; she has not the spirit of a woman. Why does she not despise him, and petition for a divorce.

You men cannot realize the strength of female attachment, she replied; it is next to the dissolution of soul and body, to separate a wife's affections from her husband.

That sort of romantic sentiment, he exclaimed, may answer the purpose of novel writers, but I deal in facts, not fiction; I have seen wives who evinced nothing but bitterness toward their husbands.

So have I, she replied; but that was when the long and agonizing love struggle was over, and a reaction had taken place; then, indeed, a wife's emotions toward her husband are deeply imbued with the oil of wormwood. There are thousands whose powers of endurance are insufficient to sustain them through the struggle. They die, the world says, of consumption, or inflammation, or brain fever, or some other disease. But our physicians know full well that strong mental emotion obstructs the circulation of the vital fluids, and hence the most susceptible part of the system becomes diseased.

The mother of Fidelia knew her husband's decided character, therefore she deemed it imprudent to urge the point, fearing she might excite his anger. Yet she trembled for the consequences, and when Fidelia interrogated her in regard to the letter, she gave an evasive answer. Fidelia supposed, however, that her father had done as she requested, and expected when her husband had received the letter he would come for her, and she hoped the affair would be settled amicably. Day after day she sat in a chamber window which overlooked her father's farm. It was midsummer, and nature was dressed in glorious attire. Innumerable birds had built their nests in the orchards, and were nourishing their young with tender care. But Fidelia was blind to the beauty of the scene, and deaf to the music of the groves. Her eyes were constantly on the road which ran along the distant hill, hoping to see her husband's carriage; but she watched in vain. Weeks rolled on, and still he came not; and she became impatient, and reproached herself for having been persuaded to leave her own home.

She looked upon her little Viola, who, with elastic

steps and buoyant spirit was bounding through the orchards, in frolic with her pet lamb. "God bless her forever!" ejaculated Fidelia, "and save her from the anguish which lacerates my poor heart." The child had ceased her sport, and, looking up, she met her mother's mournful gaze. Children have great observation, and although Viola knew not the cause, she saw her mother was unhappy, and with the instinctive sympathy of childhood, she wished to do something to gratify her.

Running to the house she said, Ma, shall I go and pick some strawberries for you?

Yes, dear, replied Fidelia, as she drew the child to her side and impressed an ardent kiss on her fair forehead. Just then she espied a covered carriage on the distant highway, and she hoped Inconstancious was coming at last. She called her mother and communicated to her the joyful news.

Now, mother, said she, treat him kindly. Do not allude to his faults, for we are all liable to err. Do go and entreat father to receive him with kindness.

But it may not be Inconstancious, said her mother.

It surely looks like his carriage, exclaimed Fidelia.

It is a covered carriage, replied her mother, and like his in that particular, but the distance is such it is impossible to determine.

The remarks of the mother somewhat subdued Fidelia's excitement, but she retired to her room and adjusted her dress with care, resolving, if it was her husband, to receive him with open arms. Having finished her toilet, she seated herself again in the window, and anxiously awaited the approaching carriage; but to her disappointment it stopped by the wayside. A stranger appeared, and, taking a bright tin pail from the carriage, he started into the fields to pick strawberries. Fidelia felt sick at heart and retired to bed. On the following day the stranger again appeared. As the sun ascended, the heat became intense, and he was seen approaching the house. He rapped gently at the door, and politely asked for a drink of water; for, said he, "the heat is so oppressive that it creates a burning thirst." The hospitable master of the dwelling invited him to enter and rest from the noon-tide heat in his cool parlor.

He accepted the invitation, and reclined on the

sofa at his case. He was a man of middle age, was agreeable in conversation, and evinced some knowledge of human nature. He remarked that his head ached in consequence of stooping in the grass.

The old gentleman said that the work was uncomfortable, especially in the heat of the day, and added, the city people usually find it more convenient to buy their supply of berries.

They are obliged to do so, said the stranger, for their business demands their time and attention. With me the case is different. I am at leisure this summer, and enjoy a drive in the country. The strawberry is my wife's favorite; she preserves no other, and she has an aversion to buying berries. She understands how they are procured. Half a dozen dirty urchins are sent into the fields for them, carry nasty dishes of most any kind, and often one of their caps serves that purpose; then on the following morning the mother draws on a clean dress, and, with the berries in a clean pail, she starts for market. The people exclaim, there comes a neat-looking woman, we will buy of her. They do so, and eat the berries with great relish, not thinking they had all passed through a pair of dirty paws.

The stranger evinced a fondness for children; he caressed Viola, and talked of his own little daughter of about the same age. Viola said she would like to see her.

You shall see her, my dear, said he. I shall come again to-morrow if the weather is fine, and I will bring her along with me. She will be delighted with the ride, and it will be good for her health.

He then thanked the family for their kind attention, and departed.

The stranger is quite easy in his manners and very complaisant, remarked Fidelia.

He is so, her father replied, but I do not much like him. He has too much of the air of a jockey about him. His complaisance is external, and put on for the occasion, as we draw on a handsome garment. Such complaisance has no charms for me. I like that which proceeds from goodness.

I think, said Fidelia, I have seen him before.

Very likely, said her mother, as he is from the city, it is possible you may have seen him at church.

No, not at church, Fidelia replied; but when I was going to and returning from church, I used to see a

man who looked like him, sitting in the bar-room window at the City Hotel.

I should not be at all surprised, said her father.

On the following day the man came again, and as he had promised, he brought his little girl. As soon as Viola saw her she was overjoyed, and eagerly ran to meet her, and as they both happened to be of a talkative disposition, they soon became acquainted.

Where is the horse and carriage? asked Viola, I do not see it.

Father left it down behind the hill, replied the child.

I am sorry, said Viola, I love to see that pretty carriage. He left it on the top of the hill before. But where is your father? I do not see him.

I think he has gone to the carriage to get a little drink, said the child. There is a little flask of brandy and a tumbler in the bottom of the box, and father likes to drink now and then.

What does your father do for a living? asked Viola.

He does nothing, said the child. Ma says he is a gentleman and above work, and I have heard father

say a great many times that none but fools worked for a living; he intends to live by his wits.

Oh! exclaimed Viola, the day is warm, let us go into the house until the heat is over.

I should be very glad to do so, said the child, for I am not used to being out in the sun.

On arriving at the house Viola exhibited her stock of playthings; she had pin-balls, and needle-cushions, and thread-bags, besides half a dozen dolls. After an hour passed in admiring the various articles, Viola invited her little friend to walk up-stairs.

Now, said she, this is my play-room; and all these little shelves I made myself, and see all the pieces of crockery I have on them. If you please we will play house. You may be the mother, and I will be the girl; or you may be the girl, and I will be the mother, just as you please.

Oh, well then, let me be mother, said the little girl, for servant girls have the work to do, and mother says it is mean to work.

I never heard my mother say it was mean to work, returned Viola. I used to hear her call Bridget a noble girl, because she did the work so

well. She taught Bridget to repeat some lines, and I used to hear her saying them to herself until I learned them by heart:

"Honor and shame from no condition rise,
Act well your part, in this true honor lies."

Thus the day passed pleasantly away. Tea was prepared at an earlier hour than usual to accommodate the little lady, after which the children skipped away to the fields. Fidelia sat in the window, and watched her little daughter as she bounded away. The dear child has enjoyed this day! she exclaimed. Would to God I were sure every day of her life would be equally happy!

But I see you need rest, Mary, said Mrs. Experience, and I am afraid you are becoming excited. You may now compose your mind, and I will finish the story another time.

CHAPTER XIII.

A LOST CHILD.

MARY was not as well as usual for some days, but at length she became better, and Mrs. Experience again commenced. It was unknown to the neighbors that trouble existed between Fidelia and her husband. They supposed her protracted visit was in consequence of ill health; and on this evening a lady called to inquire if she was improving, and, entering into agreeable conversation, she remained until the shades of evening spread o'er the landscape. When she had departed, Fidelia called to her mother, and requested her to send Viola up to bed.

Her mother answered, I thought she was with you; I have not seen her this evening.

Perhaps she is with father, said Fidelia.

Your father was fatigued and retired before dark. The child must be tired, she has played hard to-day, and she has fallen asleep somewhere in the house.

They searched the house from the attic to the cellar.

Lord, have mercy! cried Fidelia. Where can she be?

She aroused her father, but he could give her no information. The last time he had seen her she was running to the field with her little visitor.

That was the last time I saw her, said Fidelia.

Her mother had not seen her since she left the tea-table. The old gentleman thought she must be in the house, and they made another search. They went through the barn and out-houses, but all in vain; they were now thoroughly alarmed. Fidelia's face was pale as death; her eyes glared wildly; her breath grew short and quick, and she trembled violently. They finally concluded she must have set down in the field and fallen asleep. With lantern in hand they traversed the fields and pastures until nearly midnight, frequently calling, Viola, Viola; then listening with suspended breath; and then their voices echoed back on the midnight air; all else was silent. Seven hours Viola had been absent when they aroused the neighbors. It was the first child

which had been lost in this quiet town, and produced a great sensation. The people exerted themselves to the utmost; torches were lighted, trumpets blown, and guns fired, while the woods and fields were scoured in every direction.

A neighbor suggested the idea of searching the well. He said she might have returned from the fields thirsty, and on going to the swinging bucket to drink, she might have pitched in.

Fidelia awaited the report in the most agonizing suspense, while the well was being explored. Only one hope had sustained Fidelia during the night. She knew the sleep of a weary child to be very sound, and she hoped that when the sun arose she would awake and return home. Now day was dawning, and they all stood looking at each other, uncertain what course to pursue. The old gentleman remarked, that the man who came from the city daily after strawberries would probably be there by nine o'clock, and they could learn of him where she was when he left.

A man among the crowd made answer: I should think, by the way he drove home last night, that he

never intended to return. I was returning from the city and met him about half way. He was running his horse at its utmost speed, while the sweat ran down the poor creature's sides in streams.

On hearing this a dark suspicion flashed on the old gentleman's mind. After a few moments of reflection he addressed the people. My friends, we thank you for your kindness and sympathy; it is useless to look further at present; you had better return home for that refreshment and rest which you need.

The young people turned away, while those who were parents gazed on each other with surprise. As they moved slowly homeward, a woman remarked, if her child were lost she could never say give up the search, until it was found either dead or alive; and they all agreed in expressing the same feeling.

Fidelia's father expressed his suspicions to his wife and said, I will mount my horse and ride to the city, where I shall soon ascertain if my suspicions are correct.

Do not be in such haste, said his wife, sit down and take some breakfast before you go.

I could not swallow it, he replied, I feel so indignant against that most consummate villain.

Do take this cup of coffee, she urged, or you will faint before you get there.

He drank the coffee, and as he returned the cup he said, go to Fidelia's chamber and tell her we have strong hopes that Viola is well.

He hastened away, while his wife went to Fidelia. Do not despair, she said, your father thinks Viola may have gone to the city with the man who was here yesterday.

Oh, no! cried Fidelia, she is an obedient child, and would never have gone without permission.

If she went, returned her mother, the man probably employed stratagem to decoy her away.

If so, he must have been employed by Inconstancious, exclaimed Fidelia, with a look of horror.

Are you sure father did as I requested? Did he burn that letter and write a milder one?

Her mother hesitated.

Do not deceive me, cried Fidelia imploringly, tell me truly, did father send that rash letter?

I advised him to burn it, replied her mother, but I fear he mailed it.

Then I am undone forever! cried Fidelia; throwing herself on the carpet she screamed loudly, as she beat her head and tore her hair.

Her father's suspicion was correct in regard to Viola. The man who came for strawberries had instructed his little girl to entice Viola into the field after tea. As the sun was sinking behind the hills, he said to his little daughter, you did not know I had apples and candy in the box of the carriage.

Oh, no, said she, why did you not give me some before?

Because, he replied, I saved them for you to eat going home. There is enough for you and Viola too. If she will get into the carriage and ride a piece with us, she shall have half.

As he spoke he walked slowly toward the carriage. Viola's eyes sparkled at the idea of apples and candy, and she said, I will run and ask mother.

Oh, no, he cried, I can't stop for that; while you are gone to ask your mother I shall drive away.

Viola hesitated until he displayed an abundance of fruit and confectionery. He passed his little girl into the carriage and extended his arms for Viola. She looked at the fruit; the temptation was too great, and she allowed him to pass her in also. He quickly closed the carriage, and, urging his horse to its utmost speed, he bore off the prize in triumph. As he reached the suburbs of the city he slackened his pace. Chuckling at his own success, he said to himself, this has proved the best job of the season; very little trouble and sure pay.

When Fidelia's father reached the city, he thought to go directly to the house of Inconstantious, but before reaching it he saw Delila walking in her garden with Inconstantious by her side, who was leading the little Viola.

She was the first to see him, and joyfully crying out, there is grand-pa, she ran to meet him.

Inconstantious pursued her, and seizing her in his arms, he sped into the house, being followed by Delila, who closed the door with violence. On arriving at the dwelling, the old gentleman rung the bell, but no footsteps approached. He attempted to open the

door, and found it locked. Passing around the house he tried the back-door, but that also was fastened. He lingered around the establishment awhile, when looking up at the windows he saw they were closed, and that the curtains were drawn down. He then went to a house on the other side of the street, determining to await an interview with Inconstantious.

The lady of the house met him in the door. She had been Inconstantious' and Fidelia's neighbor for five years, and had witnessed the transaction of the morning with utter astonishment.

Tell me, dear sir, she exclaimed, what can this mean?

It means, he answered, that Inconstantious is a perjured wretch, and has forsaken my daughter for the society of a harlot, and, to fill up the measure of his iniquity, he has robbed her of her only child.

You amaze me, she cried, it seems utterly impossible. I have always supposed them to be a happy pair.

They were so; she seemed perfectly happy until this polluted woman established herself so near them, returned he, but since then Fidelia has known noth-

ing but grief and sorrow. The presence of her child alone has saved her from despair, and if I do not succeed in restoring Viola to her arms, God only knows what the result will be.

Poor Fidelia, said the lady, she looked pale and thin before she left here, and for that reason I felt no surprise when Bridget came here inquiring for a situation. She said her master had received a letter from his father-in-law, stating Fidelia's health to be so poor that she would not return at present. She added that her master had determined to close his house and board with the young widow, as he thought it would be less expensive, and more agreeable than keeping house alone.

Undoubtedly he finds it more agreeable, said the old gentleman, with bitterness. He found it more agreeable to pass his leisure there for more than three months before Fidelia left.

It has ever been a source of wonder to me, said the lady, how any female can become so lost to all sense of modesty and chastity, as to lead the life of a profligate.

I am an old man, he replied, and have observed and reflected a vast deal in my day, therefore my opinion ought to be correct. Among the various causes, none have a more powerful influence than early example. Under its baneful influence, the germs of female virtue are gradually exterminated, and the most noxious passions are cultivated. It is a pity, he added, with a deep sigh, that they whom God designed to adorn and bless the world, should, in so many instances, prove its curse.

They are, indeed, a curse to conjugal happiness, replied the lady.

The mischief would be less, said the old gentleman, if men were what they should be, and acted on principle; but the majority are led by passion. I can see no stir about yonder house, he continued, and I know not what course to pursue. I think I will go to a lawyer's office and get advice.

Having wished the lady a good morning, he called at the office of Lawyer Wise. He stated the case very minutely.

Can you prove, asked Lawyer Wise, that criminal intercourse has existed between the parties?

No, sir, he replied, we know the fact, but can produce no positive evidence.

I understood you to say, continued the lawyer, that your daughter left her husband voluntarily?

Yes, sir.

And he has claimed his child?

Exactly so, sir, was answered.

I am sorry to inform you that I can do nothing in your daughter's behalf; the law is on his side.

What do you say, sir? cried the old gentleman. Do you say our laws justify a man in breaking the marriage covenant, and in neglecting the woman he has sworn to love and cherish, until she returned broken-hearted to the home of her youth? And still further, that it justifies him in stealing away her only remaining hope and solace, even the child she bore and has tenderly nursed, and placing it under the teachings of an infamous woman? If such are our just and equal laws, then I know not the meaning of justice and equity.

No, replied Lawyer Wise, if it is proved that either a man or a woman has broken the marriage contract the law is rather severe.

But in nine cases out of ten, argued the old gentleman, it would be impossible to bring positive proof, although the fact might be positively known to them whom it most concerned.

There is a difficulty attending such cases, I admit, said Lawyer Wise; but still, the main point in law is good evidence.

The old gentleman wended his way home with a heavy heart. How can I meet Fidelia, he reflected, and tell her her child cannot be restored? No, I cannot tell her the heart-rending truth. For the first time in my life I must dissemble, and give her the impression that hope remains. Long before he reached home, Fidelia met him.

What tidings do you bring? she inquired, eagerly.

Viola is well, said her father, I saw her walking in the garden with Inconstancious.

Tell me truly, she cried, what did he say?

I did not speak with him, for when he saw me he took Viola into the house.

Into whose house? she asked; was it his own house, or Delila's?

Her father hesitated. Oh, cried she, I see it all! He is determined to abandon me.

She wept and sobbed hysterically as she exclaimed, O father, how could you return until you had invented some means to bring Viola?

I was unable to obtain an interview with Inconstancious, said he, and I went to Lawyer Wise. He is willing to do all he can, all the law admits.

Oh, dear, cried Fidelia, how can I possibly await the lingering process of a lawsuit before I see my dear child.

We must be patient and await the event, said her father.

How can I be patient, she asked, while Viola is under the influence of that vile woman; have I not witnessed her disgusting conduct from day to day? Children always imitate those who are older.

Have no fears about her, said her mother. Viola's mind is like a sheet of letter paper, and improper conduct will disgust her.

It will at first, replied Fidelia, but we are all creatures of habit; she will become less and less sensitive every day.

She is too young, said her mother, to understand the meaning of what she sees or hears, and I hope erelong we shall demand and receive her through the power of the law.

Fidelia walked the house from room to room continually. "Oh," said she, "how little I thought my husband and child would ever dwell beneath the roof of that wicked, wicked woman!" Fidelia evinced a disposition to wander abroad in the orchards, fields, and woods, and her mother tried to persuade her to remain within doors.

O mother, she said, I cannot remain in the house, the air is so stifled it will suffocate me.

It is a hysteric affection which makes you think so, said her mother. Her nightly slumbers were disturbed and broken. She always dreamed of Viola. Sometimes she fancied her on the pillow by her side, and reaching forth her arms to clasp her she would awake. Then the painful truth was renewed afresh, and she would sob and moan as she rolled from side to side. She daily solicited her father to go and ascertain what progress Lawyer Wise was making. She noticed his reluctance; besides, she had ever

noticed the painful expression of his features whenever she had urged the subject. She grew more impatient, until suspense became agony, and she could endure it no longer. One night the family had retired, and were sunk in profound slumber, while Fidelia, as usual, was walking her chamber. The moon shone brightly and the air was mild. Oh, thought Fidelia, how many miles I travel each night in this solitary chamber! If I should take as many steps toward the city, I should soon learn when I can expect to claim my child. No sooner had the idea entered her mind than she proceeded to put it in execution. Throwing a thick shawl over her shoulders and tying on her sun-bonnet, she crept slyly down stairs and started for the city. In the days of her affluence, Fidelia had never been expensive in her dress. But hers was a large development of the organ of ideality, and when she appeared abroad there was a peculiar taste visible in the adjustment of her attire. Alas! What now was taste or dress to her? But one thought filled her mind; the image of her child was indelibly impressed there. She traveled the livelong night over

hills and valleys; through long, deep, and dark woods, where the moon's rays could hardly penetrate. The cry of the roaming bear, and the howl of the prowling wolf, reverberated through the forest, but still she pressed on, heeding them not. Just as day dawned, she reached an eminence which overlooked the city, and, as she gazed upon it, she adopted the language of Job, "Oh that I was as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me!" She gazed long on her own tasteful residence, thinking of the many happy days she had passed there. She looked on the dwelling of Delila.

O God! she cried, is it possible, that my soul's dearest treasure slumbers within those polluted walls.

Overcome by mental emotion and physical exhaustion, she sunk upon the earth. What have I done, she cried, to deserve this reverse of fortune? I can in sincerity adopt the language of Job, "If I have withheld from the poor their desire, or caused the eyes of the widow to fail; if I have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless have not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of cloth-

ing, or the poor without covering. Doth not God see my ways, and count all my steps. Let me be weighed in an even balance that God may know my integrity. I put on righteousness and it clothed me. I was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; I was a mother to the poor. The blessing of him who was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. If I had made gold my hope, or had said to the most fine gold, thou art my confidence; if I had proudly exulted because my wealth was great; if I rejoiced in the destruction of my enemy. But the stranger did not lodge in the street, and I opened my door to the destitute. But now I am utterly destitute. My tears run down like rivers day and night. I have no rest, I cry out in the night, I pour out my heart like water before the Lord. I lift my hands toward him and implore for my child.

The sun was gilding the spire-tops when Fidelia arose and entered the city. She went directly to the office of Lawyer Wise, and seated herself on the steps to await his arrival.

The inhabitants of the city now began to stir, and, as they passed, gazed on Fidelia with surprise. She was an exhibition of personal negligence. Her dress was drabbled with the night dew, her shoes were covered with mud, and her hair had escaped from confinement, and hung down her back. In her nervous restlessness she had pulled off one of the strings of her sun-bonnet which hung open, and exposed her wild eyes, and haggard countenance. No one recognized in that emaciated form the interesting lady, who, six months before, had walked those streets n the bloom of womanhood. She waited long and impatiently, and at length Lawyer Wise appeared, and Fidelia eagerly followed him into the office. She proceeded to inform him of the object of her visit, and when he told her it was a hopeless case, she fell in a swoon at his feet. He raised her from the floor, and laid her on a lounge, as he sent his student for a physician. The doctor applied the usual restoratives, which were partially successful. She evinced signs of life, but none of returning consciousness. They sent a messenger to Inconstan-

cious. He was at breakfast when the tidings reached him, and he instinctively arose and reached forth his hand toward the hat-stand.

In a moment Delila was at his side, and, placing her hand on his shoulder, she said, be not deceived, my dear; it is a stratagem to decoy you into her presence. Had she minded her own business and staid in the country, it would have prevented disgrace; but no, she must come to the city and pretend to have a fit, to disgrace us and enlist the sympathies of the people.

Inconstancious replaced his hat, and seated himself again at the table.

Before noon Fidelia's father arrived. Having missed her at an early hour, and rightly guessing the course she had taken, he started immediately for the city. On finding his daughter in a state of insensibility, he looked upon her sadly, and exclaimed, Would to God it were the sleep of death, then would her suffering have ceased.

The people looked on with pity, and one gentleman kindly offered his carriage and man-servant to

convey Fidelia back to her father's house. A bed was placed in the carriage, and the still insensible Fidelia placed upon it. The servant acted as postillion, while the disconsolate father watched by her side.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEATH, AND THE MANIAC'S CELL.

It was midnight, and Fidelia muttered incoherently. Her anxious mother bent over her, exclaiming, Fidelia, do you know me?

She opened her eyes to a frightful wideness. They rolled from object to object, and she uttered broken sentences. Her answers were wandering. Her mother prevailed on her to take a little nourishment, after which she sunk into a broken slumber. On the following day she remarked to her mother, How swift is the flight of time. It seems but as yesterday since Viola was a little girl.

Viola is still a little girl, said her mother.

She is still young, replied Fidelia, but not little. She is fifteen, and if she was with us, we should see the innocence and simplicity of childhood, mingled with the development of womanhood.

Fidelia, said her mother, you know not what you say. Viola is still a little girl but eight years of age.

Mother, she cried, you cannot deceive me. I have become a clairvoyant, and I saw Viola last night with the eyes of the spirit. But, oh, that I should see my daughter there! What a mercy it would have been had I seen her lifeless body drawn from yonder well.

These are delusions of the imagination, answered her mother, do not harbor them.

Would to God it were a delusion! she exclaimed, with vehemence; but oh, it is too true! I saw her last night in Delila's parlor. They have cut the waist of her dress so low that she looked as though she was shedding her clothes. There were three libertines in the room, who were casting lascivious glances toward her; and oh, the pangs which rent my heart when I saw she had learned so soon to assume the pleasant look, and to practice the smile of allurement. "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow equal to my sorrow. Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the

balance together; for they would be heavier than the sand of the sea. He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and hath set darkness in my path. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone. My best friend abhorred me, and they whom I tenderly loved turned against me."

At times she seemed rational for a few minutes, but as soon as she spoke of Viola her mind wandered. About a month afterward, she made the same remark as before. How swift is the flight of time. Would you believe Viola has arrived at maturity?

No, replied her mother, do not allow yourself to think so; Viola is still a little girl.

I cannot be deceived, she cried, for I am a clairvoyant. Last night I induced the higher state, and saw Viola; but O mother, you cannot comprehend the agony I suffer, for she is a common courtesan, and walks the streets with a look of bold defiance.

Fidelia, exclaimed her mother, do not torture yourself with these delusive dreams.

O mother, she cried aloud, you, too, have turned

against me, and refuse your sympathy! Then wringing her hands she shrieked, "Have pity upon me, O ye my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me! I am made to possess mouths of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed unto me. I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of day.

This hallucination having got possession of her mind, it followed her continually with extreme torture. The family were often disturbed at dead of night by the voice of the distracted Fidelia, fervently praying that her beloved daughter might be reclaimed to the path of virtue. Any attempt to convince her of her error only increased her misery, for she thought her parents had no pity. She suffered so long and so intensely, that the intervals of reason ceased to return, and she became wholly insane. At length she conceived the idea that she had a third time seen Viola with the eyes of the clairvoyant. It was, as usual, in the silent night, when all else was still, save her own frantic spirit. Her parents were aroused by her cries; and on entering her room found her distracted. Every fea-

ture was distorted, and her entire body was in a state of agitation. It was long before they succeeded in composing her sufficiently to learn the cause of these violent emotions.

At length she exclaimed, O mother, I have seen Viola to-night! She looks old and haggard; how quickly she has arrived at the last stage of prostitution. She is a homeless wanderer, with none to befriend her. She is diseased, drunken, and wretched; scorned by both sexes; despised by all, and spurned alike from the residence of virtue and the abode of infamy.

Fidelia, said her mother, how old do you imagine Viola to be?

She paused a moment, and at length she said, Viola is about thirty.

Well, replied her mother, I know numerous matrons who are hale and blooming at thirty.

Yes, I know it, said Fidelia, but they are virtuous women, who are surrounded by their children, and are filled with the hopes which a rising family incites; but licentiousness is conducive to premature age in either sex, and especially in females.

Now, said the old lady, let me convince you that this is but the hallucination of a diseased brain. You are but twenty-eight years of age, how then can your daughter be thirty?

Miracles existed eighteen hundred years ago, argued Fidelia, and why not now? At any rate the eyes of the spirit can never be deceived. But now that the world has forsaken her, I hope to induce her to return to my bosom. Gladly, joyfully, would I receive the returning prodigal. To-morrow I shall go forth, and shall cease not to wander up and down the earth until the lost is found.

Her mother, finding it useless to endeavor to undeceive her, ceased to reason with her, but persuaded her to retire to bed. On the following morning she ascended early to Fidelia's chamber. Silence reigned within. She listened at the key-hole, but she heard no sound.

Exhausted nature has sunk to repose, she whispered, thank God, she sleeps at last. When the sun had ascended high, she again listened at the door. Yet all was still; she raised the latch and peeped in. With consternation she beheld the chamber vacant.

Then she remembered the words of Fidelia, that she would cease not to wander until the lost was found.

The panic spread throughout the house and neighborhood, and a general search commenced, but conjecture was their only guide. Some thought it most probable that she had gone to the city, as she believed her daughter to be a wanderer there, and therefore she started in that direction. Others said insane persons generally took to the woods in order to elude pursuit. Accordingly they searched the woods.

Before this alarm, Fidelia's parents had found themselves nearly exhausted. This great affliction, added to the infirmities of age, and being so long harrassed and disturbed in their nightly rest by the moans and cries of Fidelia, had seemed about to overpower them; but now fatigue was forgotten. Her father sprung on his horse with the elasticity of youth, and scoured the country in every direction, anxiously inquiring of every person he met if they had seen his distracted daughter. The party who went to the city returned without success; they had made inquiries all the way, but were unable to trace

her. The party from the woods returned not until night had drawn her sable curtain. Some asserted they had a glimpse of Fidelia through the trees; but she disappeared so suddenly, that others thought it only an optical illusion. They concluded, however, to concentrate their numbers and scour the woods on the following day.

Although Fidelia was deprived of reason, she still retained her shrewdness, and she firmly believed her daughter to be a miserable outcast, wandering through the streets of the city in a destitute and suffering condition. She was aware, also, that the class of females to which she supposed her daughter to belong, roamed abroad in the night, and her object was to reach the city under cover of darkness, and thread its lanes and alleys until she found Viola. She knew, too, that she would be pursued and taken back to her father's house if she continued her journey by the light of day, therefore she resolved to conceal herself in the woods until the shades of night appeared. She had become faint with hunger, and had ventured forth to pick some berries, when she

was surprised by her pursuers, but she eluded them so adroitly that they were in doubt whether they were not deceived.

At the close of day she hearkened, and hearing no voice or sound, she regained the road, and traveled with rapidity. The idea of once more embracing her long lost daughter excited her nervous system to that degree which lent her the swiftness of the deer, and she arrived at the city at a little past midnight. On the following day, a general search was being made in the woods, when a messenger arrived from the city, stating that the watchman had arrested an insane woman and confined her in the watch-house. A physician had informed them who she was, and where her friends resided. Her father again hurried to the city, and there found Fidelia locked up in the watch-house. The idea was idelibly impressed on her mind, that, if suffered to roam at large she would regain her daughter, and for that reason confinement was excruciating torture, and she had become a raving maniac. The broken-hearted father was preparing to take her again to the country, but was advised

by the physicians to convey her to the insane asylum.

It will be impossible, they urged, for you to prevent her escape, for it is the yearnings of maternal affection which impels her; she hopes in these nocturnal rambles to meet and reclaim her daughter.

Fidelia was conveyed to the asylum and confined in the maniac's cell. These cells were situated at a distance from the main building, and it was there I last saw Fidelia. She had persisted in tearing every rag of clothes from her person, until they clothed her in a hemp robe. This robe was drawn together with a linen cord, and tied behind in a hard knot. This garment defied her strength, but in her fits of frenzy she tore her hair from her head and bit her own flesh. At the top of the narrow cell there was a small opening designed to admit light and air. Through this aperture we looked down upon the agonized Fidelia. She was rolling in the dirt, foaming at the mouth, and uttering the most appalling sounds. Her blood-shot eyes protruded from their sockets, and at the sight of us she sprung to her feet

and imploringly stretching forth her arms toward us, she shrieked for help. We turned from the revolting spectacle, and the words of the poet fell from my lips,

> "Oh, 'tis a glorious boon to die,
> This favor can't be prized too high."

Mrs. Experience ceased; her narrative was ended. Mary had listened with profound attention.

Oh! she sobbed out, as she raised her eyes, bright with the dew of pity to the face of Mrs. Experience, how light have been my afflictions compared with those of Fidelia. How many hours I have sat brooding over the past, regretting the early death of my dear Edwin. I could not be reconciled, for that cruel event deprived me of friends, fortune, and happiness. Yet it was but the summons of God, that, as we fondly hope, raised him to a higher sphere, and to purer enjoyments. How overwhelming would have been the calamity had he outlived conjugal affection, forgotten his moral and religious principles, and brought the foul stain of perjury on his soul.

I see how it is, said Mrs. Experience. I have talked too long, and my story has excited you too

much. I will leave the room while you try to obtain some repose.

Mrs. Experience continued with Mary as long as circumstances would admit, when Mrs. Benevolence came and remained with her to the end. As life drew near its close, she asked Mary if she was resigned to death.

Yes, she answered, I have seen enough of earth, and am ready to depart. Why should I wish to stay! All my loved ones have passed away into the mysterious world, and life without love has but few attractions.

It was autumn, and Nature had outlived her charms. Her faded robe was falling in fragments from her person, and a wreath of withered flowers encircled her brow. She was shedding cold, misty tears, and breathing mournful sighs, for all her lovers had deserted her and retreated to the genial fireside, when the hearse was seen returning from the city of the dead.

Who has been buried to-day? asked a passing individual of the sexton's wife.

Don't know, she replied, funerals are so common,

I do not always inquire ; it is some low person, you see there is no procession.

Who was that low individual? It was Mary. She of noble principles, refined sentiments, and affectionate heart. Yes, it was Mary. She sleeps in an obscure corner of yonder church-yard beside her darling babe. No memorial marks the spot, no mourner bends by the humble mound to offer up prayer, or to indulge grief. Reader, weep not at Mary's fate, for she rests in peace. But reserve thy tears for the most unfortunate Fidelia, for whose relief stern death still refuses to perform his office. She weeps no more. The agony of nature absorbs the streams of grief ere they fall. She lives to pray and implore, to rave and shriek, to render night hideous by her unearthly yells. Yes, she still lives, the tortured evidence of WOMAN'S WRONGS.

THE END.

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She is too young, said her mother, to understand the meaning of what she sees or hears, and I hope erelong we shall demand and receive her through the power of the law.

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